

# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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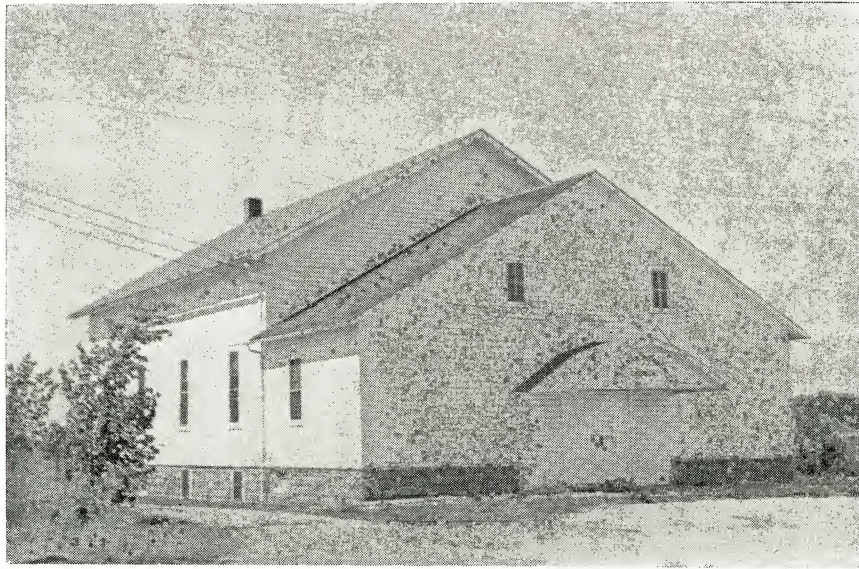


Photo by Everett Freed

## Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Indiana.

The present frame building, pictured above, was erected in 1875, and enlarged in 1913.

## A Centennial History of the Holdeman Mennonite Church

LLOYD V. CONRAD

The first Mennonites to settle in the western part of Elkhart County came from the state of Ohio. In 1843, John Smith from Medina County, Ohio, came to Elkhart County, Indiana, purchased a farm, and then returned to his home in Ohio.

Two years later, in the fall of 1845, he and his son Joseph settled on the farm he had purchased earlier. In the spring of that same year, Bishop Martin Hoover, his son John Hoover, and Christian Henning with their families came also from Medina County, Ohio, and settled in Harrison Township. Jacob Strohm had already settled here before they arrived. In the spring of 1848, Christian Christophel, Jacob Christophel, and Jacob Wisler with their families settled in the same township, having come from Columbiana County, Ohio. During the summer of 1848, twenty-four more families arrived from Wayne, Medina, Columbiana, and

Mahoning counties in Ohio. Most of these had originally come from Pennsylvania as pioneers to the state of Ohio. These early settlers held their first church service on Ascension Day, 1848, in a schoolhouse about a half mile north of the present village of Southwest. There were sixteen people present at this first service in which Jacob Wisler, a minister, delivered the principal address. Bishop Martin Hoover who was rather feeble because of his age (being 88 at the time) made only a few remarks. There was no singing of hymns as there was no one present who was able to lead. Following this first meeting, regular church services were held every two weeks. In the summer of 1849, a log meetinghouse was built at the present location of the Yellow Creek Mennonite Church.<sup>1</sup> Soon after the organization of the congregation the aged Bishop Martin Hoover ordained Jacob Wisler to the office of bishop.<sup>2</sup>

Among the twenty-four families who came to Elkhart County in 1848 were the George Holdeman and the Frederick Landis families who settled in Elkhart Township.<sup>3</sup> Frederick Landis was married to Catherine Holdeman, a sister of George.<sup>4</sup> With them also were Mrs. Jacob Landis (Frederick Landis' widowed

mother), Frederick's brother Jacob and family, and his nephew Joseph Landis. This Joseph Landis later (1870) located in Wakarusa and married Christiana Freed.<sup>5</sup> In the fall of 1849, the George Holdeman family located in Olive Township on a farm which was purchased from the government. At about the same time, the widowed mother of George Holdeman, Christiana Buzzard Holdeman, with her nephew Christian Shaum, and her younger children John, Susannah, and Abraham came from Wayne County, Ohio, and located in Baugo Township. John, having married in 1847, was accompanied by his wife and small daughter.<sup>6</sup> John Davidhizar, a young man of Mennonite parentage from Butler County, Pennsylvania, who purchased land in St. Joseph County, Indiana, in 1848, also came with the widow Christiana Holdeman. Later he married a daughter of Jacob Landis (whose widow and family had settled in Elkhart Township in 1848) and then united with the church.<sup>7</sup> During the following year (1850) the Samuel and Joseph Holdeman families also made the trek from Wayne County, Ohio, to Elkhart County, Indiana, the latter coming late in the fall.<sup>8</sup> The next spring (1851) Abraham Weldy, whose wife Nancy was



a daughter of Margaret Holdeman Yoder Freed, left Holmes County, Ohio, for Elkhart County, Indiana. Besides his wife and one child, he was accompanied by his father, John Weldy and family, and his wife's sister, Elizabeth Yoder. In November of this same year Elizabeth Yoder married Henry Smeltzer who had come from Richland County, Ohio, in 1849 with his parents. Michael Smeltzers.<sup>9</sup> During the year 1851, the John Weldy family located in St. Joseph County.<sup>10</sup> In the fall of 1851, the David S. Holdeman family and the Jacob Freed families also joined this westward migration of the Mennonites, coming from Wayne County, Ohio, to Elkhart County, Indiana. Jacob Freed had made the trip in the spring with the Weldy families in order to invest in land and then returned to Ohio to bring the entire family to this community. The David Holdeman family returned to Ohio in 1856 and then moved to Kansas in 1873.<sup>11</sup> Others who arrived in these early years included David Lechlitner who came from Richland County, Ohio, before 1851, for in March of that year he was married to Susannah Holdeman; the Peter Loucks family came in 1851 from Wayne County, Ohio; the Valentine Hartman family came from Ashland County, Ohio, in 1848; the Adam Hartman family came from the same county in 1849.<sup>12</sup> The Mark Tintzman family located in Locke Township in 1851.<sup>13</sup> The John Culp family settled in the community in the same year or soon afterwards and a number of other families within the next year or two.<sup>14</sup>

All of these early settlers were members of the Yellow Creek congregation as it was the only organized congregation at that time—services were held there every two weeks. On alternate Sundays the ministers would arrange for services in schoolhouses or in the homes of the members who lived some distance from Yellow Creek. The George Holdeman home which was located southwest of the present town of Wakarusa was one of these homes in which services were held regularly every four weeks. As more and more new settlers located in the area near this home, the need for a meetinghouse became apparent. In the summer of 1851, a lease was secured to the plot of ground on the east side of the road from the present church building and a log church was erected.<sup>15</sup> Joseph Holdeman, who had arrived just the previous October, and who was an experienced carpenter, was in charge of the construction.<sup>16</sup> The building was about twenty-four by thirty-four feet in dimensions with the narrower side toward the road. The entrance was on the west end and there were two windows on each end and three on each side. At first the room was not ceiled, neither was there any provision for heating the building. The pulpit desk which consisted of a plank with legs fastened into it was at the east end of the room—it could hardly be called a pulpit desk, for it did not stand upon a pulpit—there was no raised plat-

form or pulpit as we have today. The benches made from slabs had no backs. Some years later the house was sided, shutters were placed upon the windows, the room was ceiled, and a stove was placed in the middle of the room. The deed for the plot of ground was granted in 1854 for one dollar. On June 27, 1866, the congregation purchased for \$100 the plot of ground on the west side of the road, that on which the present building stands. The plan was to use the land on the east side of the road for a cemetery. Only a few burials were ever made, however, and the idea of a cemetery was later abandoned. The present frame church house on the west side of the road was first erected in 1875 with Jacob Link as the head carpenter. While the construction was in progress, using the old log church as a workshop, the regular church services were held in the Bunker Hill United Brethren Church at Wakarusa. As first built, the present structure had an assembly room forty by forty-two feet in dimensions, with two cloakrooms and a hall at the east end. This building was first heated with two large room heating stoves located on the north side and the south side of the assembly room at about the middle of the room lengthwise. Since there were few evening meetings at this time, no adequate lighting system was installed. Sometime between 1890 and 1895 large kerosene lights were installed in the church in order to provide better lighting for evening services. Some years later a gas lighting system was installed.<sup>17</sup> In the late summer and fall of 1913 this building was enlarged and remodeled. The entire structure was raised and a basement constructed underneath. The two heating stoves were removed and a furnace was installed in the basement. The cloakrooms and hall were removed from the original structure and placed in the new addition on the east end.<sup>18</sup> The building was wired for electricity and electric lights were installed. While this remodeling program was in progress, regular Sunday services were held in the North Union Church, about a mile and a half southwest of the Holdeman Church.<sup>19</sup> In 1941 the water pump which was south of the building was removed and an electric water pressure system was installed and rest rooms constructed underneath the cloakrooms. In the winter of 1946-47, the floor of the assembly room was sanded and finished, and a new pulpit desk and chairs were purchased. During the summer of 1950, a new ceiling and new light fixtures were installed in the assembly room; and during the past summer (1951) a new furnace (an oil burner) was installed and the basement remodeled in order to provide classrooms for the primary-junior department of the Sunday school. Early in the history of the church, sheds were constructed for shelter for the horses and buggies and wagons which were used as the means of transportation to and from church services. As late as 1916 the

question of building additional sheds on the east side of the road was considered. The coming of the automobile, however, made the sheds unnecessary and no more were constructed. In 1941, all of the sheds to the north of the church were removed and in the spring of 1949 the row of sheds to the west of the church was also removed; thus disappeared the last evidence of the era of the horse and buggy as the means of travel to and from church.

The first trustees of the church were Abraham Weldy and John Holdeman. In the earlier years of the congregation, trustees were chosen to serve for their entire lives but later a three-year term was established for the office of trustee. However, most of the trustees have served more than one term. Of the first two trustees, Abraham Weldy served in this capacity until a short time before his death in January, 1909; John Holdeman served until 1866 when he moved to Clinton Township. At that time Cyrus Flickinger, who had come from Mahoning County, Ohio, in 1864, was elected to succeed John Holdeman.<sup>20</sup> Sometime after 1854, Daniel Freed was elected as a third trustee; after his ordination to the office of deacon he was succeeded by John Good who came to the community from Fairfield County, Ohio, in 1880.<sup>21</sup>

No record has been found of the first church services in the Holdeman Church, but it can be safely assumed that it followed the traditional pattern for Mennonite services of the time. Since the Yellow Creek congregation was the only organized Mennonite congregation in the western part of Elkhart County at this time, it is obvious that the first ministers to serve the Holdeman congregation were the ministers from Yellow Creek. For a number of years there was no clearly defined division of the two congregations, as ministers and members alternated at the two places of worship, but Yellow Creek was the place at which baptismal and communion services were held. The Mennonites west of Goshen were all considered as one congregation with two places of worship. However, by 1875 the separation into two distinct congregational organizations had been well established.<sup>22</sup>

The ministry of the Yellow Creek Church at the time of the building of the first log church at Holdemans one hundred years ago included Bishop Jacob Wisler and minister Jacob Christophel who were referred to in the first paragraph of this dissertation. Another minister by the name of Benjamin Hershey had moved into the community in 1850, coming from upper Canada; in 1860, however he moved on to Whiteside County, Illinois, and later (1870) to Shelby County, Missouri, where he was ordained to the office of bishop.<sup>23</sup> Daniel Moyer, who had come to Elkhart County in 1849 from Ashland County, Ohio, was ordained to the ministry at Yellow Creek about 1850; this aggressive and able minister met death very suddenly in a railroad accident



in Michigan in 1864 while on his way to Canada in church work.<sup>24</sup> Another early minister was John Bare who had settled west of Waterford and died in 1855.<sup>25</sup>

Jacob Freed who came to this community in the fall of 1851 had been ordained to the ministry about 1837 in Holmes County, Ohio, and served the Holdeman Church in that office until his death in 1868.<sup>26</sup> Daniel Brundage, an ordained minister from York County, Ontario, moved to Elkhart County in 1858; he served as a minister here, until he moved to Morgan County, Missouri, where he was ordained a bishop. Later he moved on to Kansas where he was active in the organization of new churches among the settlers there. In 1889 he returned to Elkhart County to live with relatives; he was recognized a bishop here, but was not very active because of his age.<sup>27</sup> The first deacon in the congregation was John Oyer who later transferred to the Evangelical Church.<sup>28</sup> This probably took place before 1860, for in that year Joseph Holdeman, who supervised the construction of the first church building, was ordained to the office of deacon.<sup>29</sup>

In 1864, a very capable young minister by the name of Daniel Brenneman came into this community from Fairfield County, Ohio. Because of his enthusiasm for more aggressive church work, he became involved in a controversy with the conservative bishop, Jacob Wisler. "The friends of Wisler charged that Brenneman was vain of his popularity, disrespectful of the bishop, overbearing in his disposition and ambitious for place and power. The friends of Brenneman charged that Wisler was envious because of his co-worker's superior ability and greater popularity."<sup>30</sup> The controversy continued to grow until it was brought under investigation by the conference, and Wisler, because the decision went against him, withdrew from the church and took with him a number of followers. John Troxel, a deacon, from the Holdeman congregation stood with Wisler and, as a result, his services in the congregation ended in 1871.<sup>31</sup> This left the ministry of the congregation with Joseph Holdeman as deacon, Daniel Brenneman as minister, and Jacob A. Beutler who had been ordained to the ministry in 1868, just four years after he had moved into the community from Ohio. Following this division, John M. Brenneman from Ohio had bishop oversight of the congregation until October, 1872, when Jacob A. Beutler was ordained to the office of bishop.<sup>32</sup>

Daniel Brenneman, the capable and popular minister, however, was impatient with the slowness with which the Mennonite churches entered into aggressive Christian work, and decided that it was futile to wait, that the church was bound by conservatism to such an extent that she would not change. So in 1874, he left the Mennonite Church, taking with him a number of followers, to start a new church which was known for a number of years as the Mennonite Brethren in

Christ Church, and now as the United Missionary Church.

From about 1872 to about 1881, James Culbertson served the congregation as a minister. He left, however, to start a church of his own, but gaining few if any followers, he served the Bunker Hill United Brethren Church for a while and later joined the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, but did not remain with that group permanently. About 1880, Joseph Holdeman, upon receiving considerable criticism in regard to his service as deacon, frankly said that if the congregation did not want him to serve as deacon, he would take his seat with the members and stay there. Therefore he no longer served the congregation as deacon, but remained a member of conference in the office of deacon.<sup>33</sup> Soon after this episode, Daniel Freed was ordained in 1881 as deacon to assist Jacob H. Wisler who had also been ordained as deacon in 1873.<sup>34</sup>

During the last year of his life (1886), Bishop Beutler ordained Abraham Culp to the office of deacon, Amos Mumaw to the office of minister, and Henry Shaum of the Olive congregation to the office of bishop. The following year, 1887, Bishop Shaum ordained Jacob O. Loucks to the office of minister — Loucks, however, never was active in this position.<sup>35</sup> In 1898, Amos Mumaw returned to his former home near Wooster, Ohio, and continued his ministry there. In 1889, Henry Weldy was ordained to the ministry and served the congregation for many years. During the earlier years of his ministry he also served the mission outpost at Teegarden.

In 1892, because of Bishop Shaum's failing health, he ordained John F. Funk of the Prairie Street congregation to the office of bishop.<sup>36</sup> Funk was well known throughout the church as the editor of the *Herald of Truth* and through this church paper had wielded considerable influence. In 1893, Funk ordained John Hygema to the ministry for the Holdeman congregation; Hygema served until 1907 when he went west on account of his health and then died in California. Following the death of the deacon, Daniel Freed, in 1897, Samuel Smeltzer was ordained to that office by Bishop Funk. Bishop Funk was a very capable church leader, but became involved in difficulties in his home church which led to his removal from the office in 1902. I. J. Buchwalter from Ohio then served temporarily as bishop. J. S. Shoemaker of Freeport, Illinois, was ordained bishop in 1902, and then had the bishop oversight of the congregation until 1904 when David Burkholder of the Nappanee congregation was ordained to that responsibility. J. K. Bixler, who was ordained to the ministry in that same year, was ordained a bishop in 1907 to assist Bishop Burkholder. D. A. Yoder, who was ordained to the ministry in 1907 and transferred to the Olive congregation the following year, was also ordained in 1910 to assist in the bishop oversight of the district.

From 1907 to 1913, the bishop responsibilities in this congregation were shared by Burkholder and Bixler; from 1913 to 1919, these duties were shared by Bixler and Yoder. From 1919 to 1949, however, D. A. Yoder carried the responsibility alone. In 1908, Bishop Burkholder ordained to the ministry Silas Weldy, who gave a long period of service, not only to the congregation but also to the church at large, having been active in the organization of the district mission board and for many years served on the executive committee of that board. He also served on the executive committee of the Sunday School Conference. In 1913, Bishop Burkholder ordained J. I. Weldy to serve in the capacity of deacon. He was also active in promoting good singing in the church, having taught singing schools, not only in the home congregation, but in many other places as well. In 1934, Eli Christophel, who had been ordained a deacon at Cullom, Illinois, and had transferred to this congregation, was elected to assist in those duties here; and in 1950, Manford Freed, who had been ordained to that office at Brutus, Michigan, and had returned to this congregation in 1931, was elected to serve as deacon. In 1936, Warren Shaum was ordained to the office of minister by Bishop Yoder.<sup>37</sup>

In December of 1949, after a long period of faithful service as bishop, D. A. Yoder resigned that responsibility in this congregation. With the assistance of the executive committee of conference, the congregation then elected George J. Lapp, formerly a missionary to India, to serve as bishop and pastor. The long years of experience on the mission field and in other church work were of untold value to him in guiding the church through a critical year. In November, 1950, he ordained Simon Gingerich, formerly of Parnell, Iowa, to the ministry; and then in January, 1951, after a year of much-appreciated service, he answered the call of God to serve Him in the better land. In February, 1951, again with the help of the executive committee of conference, the congregation faced the task of choosing another bishop. At that time, Lee J. Miller, was elected to serve in that office. He, and Simon Gingerich as minister, and Manford Freed as deacon now carry the responsibility for the leadership of the congregation.

The Holdeman congregation was a member of the Ohio Mennonite Conference until October 14, 1864, when the first Indiana Mennonite Conference was organized.<sup>38</sup> For a number of years, however, there was very close co-operation and exchange of ministerial help between the two districts. At the time of the Wisler division, a group of six bishops from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Canada was called in to investigate the difficulty and hold a "church trial," which led to Wisler's removal from the office.<sup>39</sup> Bishop oversight was in charge of an out-of-state bishop temporarily until the ordination of a local minister to that office.



Repeated efforts to reunite the two factions of the Wisler division met with failure. Again in connection with the difficulties in 1901-2, a number of bishops and ministers from other states were called in to help settle the difficulties. In 1917, the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference merged with the Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite Conference. In 1923, another division took place in several congregations of the conference district, but did not affect the Holdeman congregation.

The first Sunday school was held in the old log church about 1872. Jacob A. Beutler, bishop, and Joseph Holdeman, deacon, were two of the first superintendents. It seems that the object of these early Sunday schools was to teach the German language in order to preserve its use in the church. Pupils who could read German used the German New Testament for their studies, while those who could not read German were taught the German alphabet and first elements of reading. Attendance was largely children at first, for Sunday school was considered a children's affair. For the first twenty-five years, the Sunday school was held only during the summer months, and often interest died out during the hot weather. The Sunday school in the summer of 1894 with Henry Davidhizar as superintendent and Isaac Witmer as assistant has been remembered as having been a very successful one. The year 1897 with Charles Link as superintendent and Henry Davidhizar as assistant was the first that Sunday school was maintained throughout the entire year. In 1895, the International Uniform Lessons were adopted, three years after the Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart began publishing these lesson helps. During the early years of the congregation regular Sunday services were held every two weeks. Since the turn of the century, regular services (Sunday school and preaching) have been held every Sunday except for a few occasions. The change from the German to the English language came gradually and with less difficulty than in some other congregations.<sup>40</sup> Early in the history of the Sunday school, a library was established—in 1897 a librarian and an assistant were elected. The Sunday School Secretary's Record Books have not all been preserved; so it is not possible to determine the exact date when the library was started. In 1915, a separate department in the basement was begun for the children.<sup>41</sup> The fiscal year of the Sunday school had always coincided with the calendar year until 1949, when the fiscal year was changed to begin October 1 and end September 30 in order to conform with the recommendations of the Commission for Christian Education and Young People's Work of the Mennonite General Conference.<sup>42</sup>

A summer Bible school was first conducted here early in the summer of 1922. This, however, cannot be considered a permanent beginning, for in later years

none was held. A few years ago, summer Bible school was again revived.

The Holdeman congregation was host for the first regular sessions of the Mennonite General Conference held in 1899.<sup>43</sup> The congregation has also entertained many times the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, more frequently in the earlier years than in recent years. The Sunday School Conference (now known as the Christian Workers' Conference) has also convened here on several occasions.

There is some difference of opinion as to the time of the first revival meetings and the evangelist. This difference of opinion may arise from different interpretations as to how many consecutive evening services are necessary to be considered a series of revival meetings. Three of the first evangelists to serve here were J. S. Coffman, Christian B. Brenneman, and Andrew Shenk—each of these is reported to have conducted evangelistic services at Holdeman in the years 1894 and 1895. During the first twenty years of the twentieth century, Bible conferences followed by a series of evangelistic meetings were held almost every year and sometimes more frequently. The congregation during its history has assisted with the work in several mission outposts, namely, Teegarden, Union Chapel (Madison Township), and Mishawaka. The last-named was a co-operative venture of the Holdeman, Olive, and Prairie Street congregations and was started as a result of discussions in the joint semiannual Sunday-school meetings of the three congregations which were first held in 1908. This mission work in Mishawaka was later discontinued.

Young people's Bible meeting (Sunday evening meeting) was first started in 1896 in spite of some opposition, but was discontinued soon afterwards.<sup>44</sup> Sometime later it was reorganized and has continued to the present. In the summer of 1922, the Young People's Literary Society was first organized and amid some uncertainties continued until 1925. In 1927 it was reorganized and has continued to the present. Since then the organization has also been affiliated with the Northern Indiana Literary Convention and its successors, the Indiana-Michigan Literary Convention and the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Youth Fellowship. The history of the young people's organization in the local congregation indicates periods of great enthusiasm, as well as periods of near death. In December, 1950, the organization voted to invite the newly ordained minister, Simon Gingerich, and his wife to serve as sponsors of the group. This indicates the change of attitude on the part of the ministry toward the youth organization from opposition to tolerance and now finally to co-operation.

From the "Church Secretary's Membership Record Book," evidence is gathered to list ordained men in other congregations who at one time were members of the Holdeman congregation. Isaac

B. Witmer, who was one of the early Sunday-school superintendents, later moved to Ohio where he was for many years a minister in the Leetonia congregation. Amos Weldy, after transferring to the Berea congregation in Daviess County, Indiana, was ordained to the office of deacon; Samuel B. Metzler, after transferring to the Salem congregation, was ordained a deacon. Ray F. Yoder, soon after his marriage, transferred to the Salem congregation where he was later ordained to the ministry and more recently has been ordained to the office of bishop. Francis Freed, who is a minister in the Salem congregation, was first a member at Holdeman. James Bucher, a few years after uniting with the church here, transferred to Kouts and was ordained to the ministry for the congregation; he has served in various other places since then. Andrew J. Miller, who is now a deacon in the Olive congregation, was formerly a member here. Abram Hartman in his youth united with the Holdeman congregation and later transferred to the Yellow Creek congregation where he now serves as deacon. From November, 1915, to June, 1916, Dr. and Mrs. George Troyer were members of the Holdeman congregation. After several years in Chicago, they spent several terms in the India mission field and are now serving in the mission in Puerto Rico.

During the hundred years of the Holdeman Mennonite Church a number of significant changes have taken place. In the first place, there were practically no young people in the church during the early years, with no activities in the church for the young people; today there are in the church a large number of alert, active, and interested young people and the church has accepted the responsibility to provide church activities for them. In the second place, Daniel Brenneman was mistaken when he thought that the church was so bound by traditional conservatism that she would not change. He lived to see the day when the church he had left had so changed that she had practically reached the ideals which he had in mind in 1872. The church today is an active, aggressive church, interested in spreading the Gospel to the four corners of the earth, and liberally contributing finances for the work of the church. Instead of numerically declining in membership, there is now an increasing membership. In the third place, there have been changes in our practice, in our ways of living the Christian life, but there have been no changes in the basic doctrinal beliefs of the church. In certain aspects, there is a stronger conviction and a more absolute testimony against some of the social evils of the world. The Lord has been "our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." Wakarusa, Ind.

(This article is reprinted from the *100th Anniversary 1851-1951 Holdeman Mennonite Church*. The footnotes may be found in this booklet).



## Did Our Forefathers Smoke?

HERMAN E. ROPP

Seventy-five years ago there was very little objection to the use of tobacco among American Mennonites. Today most of them object, and all of the various branches of the church teach against its use. How did this change come about in view of the fact that its use among people in general has increased many times during this same period? There is a widespread belief that in recent years the Mennonite brotherhood has crystallized the conscience against tobacco for the first time. Is it true, as has so often been said, that most of our forefathers had wine in the cellar and a cuspidor in the front room? Questions like these led me to inquire whether the above conception is historically accurate. I found that it is not the whole truth. Amazingly enough, objections to its use are almost as old as the history of the white man using tobacco.

The tobacco plant is native to North America. Although the exact time of its introduction to Europe is not known, it must have been soon after the middle of the sixteenth century. According to the original narratives of some of the earliest English and French voyages, Ralph Lane brought samples of tobacco to Sir Walter Raleigh in England in 1586.<sup>1</sup> The *Encyclopedia Britannica* gives the dates of its introduction into the various European countries as follows: France, 1556; Portugal, 1558; Spain, 1559; and to England in 1565.<sup>2</sup> An article in a Mennonite church paper of 1864 says that Cortez sent a sample of tobacco to the king of Spain from Yucatan in 1519.<sup>3</sup> The writer of the article, however, does not give the source of his information.

Two things should be noted in connection with its introduction into Europe. First, in the beginning its use did not meet with the approval either of the officials of the various governments or of the church. In the early 1600's King James of England decreed that smokers and users of snuff should be punished. Smoking was forbidden under penalty of death by Russia in 1634. In 1690 Pope Innocent X said users of snuff should be placed under the ban. In most of the German provincial capitals smoking was forbidden by law and under threat of penalty.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, in spite of this opposition, its use spread very rapidly. As early as 1612 tobacco was grown by John Rolfe and other colonists in Virginia. Within a short time it became the chief commodity of export to England in exchange for manufactured goods that the colonists needed.

### SOME EARLY MENNONITE OBJECTIONS

One of the first objections to the use of tobacco among Mennonites is found in the Frisian group in the Netherlands as early as 1639. This is only twenty-

seven years after it was first commercially grown in America. This would not be so surprising in view of the objections mentioned in the previous paragraph, except for the way in which it was objected to. It was not simply a warning, but it was article *nine*, of twelve articles or rules of church life drawn up by that group in that year. What they said concerning its use is so significant that I quote the entire article in a translation from the original Dutch:

Article 9. Not to drink tobacco unnecessarily, because it is mostly done as an evil habit-forming lust, to do penance for this evil-forming lust, through which one wastes his time and money and through which one becomes a burden and aversion to others who do not do so, both in bad smell and filthiness. Yea, this usage becomes so common, that instead of where one ought to bring out the Bible or the hymnbook to edify each other, there one brings out the tobacco pipe to (*ontstichtingh*) something unedifying.<sup>5</sup>

The above rules were adopted only seven years after the adoption of the Dortrecht Confession of Faith in 1632, to which the Frisian group also subscribed.

Although the Dutch Mennonites gradually weakened on this point, it was not altogether abandoned among them. In describing the Mennonite congregation of the town of Balk in Friesland of 1800, the Dutch Mennonite historian, S. Blaupot ten Cate, says the following: "Most of them do not smoke or use liquor, and they consider everything to be wasteful, that is not absolutely necessary."<sup>6</sup> The fact that it is mentioned of this one particular congregation seems to indicate that this was probably the exception rather than the rule at this time.

The Holland Mennonites were not the only ones among European Mennonites to teach against tobacco. In a conference of Palatinate and Alsatian ministers held at Steinselz in Alsace in 1752 a resolution was adopted that said the new custom of using snuff and smoking was not to be permitted among church members. If members of the church were found using it and did not discontinue to do so, they were to be disciplined and put under the ban. Forty-seven years later at another conference of Palatinate and Alsatian ministers held at Essingen in the Palatinate, this same stand was reaffirmed by a group of thirty-nine ministers.<sup>7</sup>

Many miles to the east certain people in the Molotschna Colony of the Russian Mennonites were also concerned about this question. It was one of the reasons given by Claes Reimer of the Kleine Gemeinde group for separating themselves from the main body of Russian Mennonites in 1812. It is mentioned in a pamphlet of 1838.<sup>8</sup> Whether this teaching was brought from Holland via Prussia, or if they had arrived at this conclusion from a study of the Bible in Russia, is open to conjecture. It would seem likely that they may have retained

the idea in writings at least, of which their Dutch forefathers were voluminous producers.

Although the main body of Russian Mennonites must have used tobacco at this time, these early objections were not without effect. This is especially true of the group who separated from the main body some time later and came to be called Mennonite Brethren. In the diary of the young Hutterite minister Paul Tschetter, who was one of a group of twelve Russian Mennonites who visited America in 1873 relative to obtaining land for immigration purposes, surprise is shown at the widespread use of tobacco among the American Mennonites at that time.<sup>9</sup>

### SOME AMERICAN MENNONITE OBJECTIONS

The increase of its use by the population in general seems to have weakened the objections to its use among Mennonites. Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century both European and American Mennonites smoked freely. It was apparently not until after the middle of the nineteenth century that the anti-tobacco sentiment made much headway. The first objection that the writer has been able to find is in the form of an open letter to the *Christliche Volks-Blatt* in 1864. This letter, written by a certain Henry Gram, used various Scripture references (I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17; I John 2:16) to prove that the use of tobacco violates the responsibility of the Christian to lead a clean life. He further quotes many medical men of the time as giving testimony against it. He says that the argument that God made the tobacco plant does not prove that it should be used for smoking. This letter was written in answer to an earlier letter in the *Volks-Blatt* defending its use.<sup>10</sup>

One also finds statements against tobacco in the *Herald of Truth* after 1865. In 1869 this periodical carried a reprint of a short article from *Worlds Crisis* that mentioned the evils attending the use of tobacco and snuff. In commenting upon this article, the editor, J. F. Funk, said the following: "I am glad the attention of the brotherhood is being called to this subject." He further says, "many have already broken off this habit; may others follow their example."<sup>11</sup> In the same paper a year later (1870) we find in the children's column a short letter disapproving of the tobacco habit on the basis that it "degrades, depraves, corrupts, and may even shorten life."<sup>12</sup> In 1871 this periodical carried a lengthy letter by Daniel Brenneman in which he writes that he is "pained to learn that some people have been offended by the protests against the unnecessary use of tobacco."<sup>13</sup> In the same year appeared an editorial that contains the following: "the pure religion of Jesus and tobacco have no relationship." From this time on we find more and more opposition to its use.

The periodicals were not the only ones that spoke against it. In 1884 the Indiana-



Michigan Mennonite Conference recommended that members should not use tobacco in the house of worship, and the ministers were to use their influence against the use of tobacco at all times. But it was not until 1913 that they passed a resolution that the ordination of ministers and deacons would not be recognized if they used tobacco, liquor, or narcotics in any form.<sup>14</sup>

At the 1894 assembly of the Virginia Conference, concern was shown for the "excessive" chewing during worship services, and for the "spitting" on the floors of the meetinghouses. It was decided that members should speak against this filthy habit. This conference had been meeting regularly since 1835. As far as is known this is the first time that the conference took action against tobacco. In fairness it should be said that there are no available records for the period between 1835 and 1860.<sup>15</sup>

In 1876 a small booklet entitled, *Ist Tabakrauchen eine Tugend?*<sup>16</sup> was printed at Elkhart, Indiana. This booklet lists rather thoroughly the main objections that can be given against the use of tobacco.

As has already been mentioned, after about 1880 the objections against the use of tobacco became more and more universal in the American brotherhood. Today, even though much tobacco is still used in certain sections, every branch of the church officially discourages its use.

There are various reasons that could be given for this change. In a master's dissertation entitled *Cultural Interaction Among the Mennonites Since 1870*, Harley J. Stucky expresses the belief that the Russian Mennonites were the first Mennonites to protest the use of tobacco. He believes they changed the attitude of the American Mennonites on the question within one decade of their coming to America in 1874. We have already shown that at least two American groups were speaking against it before the Russian Mennonite migration. He also thinks Dwight L. Moody and the Sunday-school temperance lessons helped crystallize the conscience against it for all American Mennonites.<sup>17</sup>

With this last-mentioned view, Dean Harold Bender of Goshen College is in complete agreement. In 1940 he wrote as follows: "Without a doubt it was the quarterly temperance lesson in the Sunday school that contributed more to driving liquor and tobacco out of the Mennonite Church (American) than any other single factor." He also says that before the days of Mennonite Sunday schools, smoking and drinking were quite common, and scarcely objected to if done in moderation.<sup>18</sup>

Goshen, Ind.

<sup>1</sup> Henry S. Burrage, *Early English and French Voyages, 1534-1608*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1947), Vol. 22, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Christliche Volksblatt*, 1864, Vol. 8, No. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ist Das Tabakrauchen eine Tugend?*

Author unknown, 1876, p. 32. C. Blaupot ten Cate, *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Holland Zeeland, Utrecht, en Gelderland*, 1e deel, 1847, p. 311.

<sup>5</sup> C. Blaupot ten Cate, *Gesch. der Doop. In Holland*, Vol. II, p. 225. This translation is by Tina van der Laag, Amsterdam, Holland.

<sup>6</sup> C. Blaupot ten Cate, *Gesch. der Doop. In Friesland*, 1839, p. 371. My own translation.

<sup>7</sup> Christian Hege, Christian Neff, *Menn. Lexicon*, under Alsace.

<sup>8</sup> C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 1941, p. 424.

<sup>9</sup> J. M. Hofer, "The Diary of Paul Tschetter," *M.Q.R.*, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 125.

*Christliche Volks-Blatt*, Vol. 8, No. 13, 1864, pp. 54, 55. This letter was one of a series of letters, pro and con, written about this time. Others may be read in the same periodical, Vol. 8, No. 14, 1864, pp. 50, 51, in the Goshen College Historical Library, and in Vol. 8, No. 7, in the Bluffton College Library, Bluffton, Ohio.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Funk, *Herald of Truth*, Vol. VI, 1869, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, 1870, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, 1871, pp. 134-5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ind.-Mich. Conference Reports*, 1864-1929, p. 34; 122.

<sup>15</sup> *Virginia Conference Minutes*, 1835-1939, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> *Ist Tabakrauchen eine Tugend?* Elkhart, Indiana, 1876, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Harley J. Stucky, *Cultural Interaction Among the Mennonites Since 1870*, unpublished manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Harold S. Bender, *Mennonite Sunday School Centennial*, 1940, p. 20.

## Imprisonment of Amish in Revolutionary War

C. Z. MAST

Along the foot of the Blue Mountains, a part of the Appalachian chain in Berks County, Pennsylvania, occurred the first organized meeting of Amish in America. By 1742 a sufficient number had located in the region to petition the Provincial Assembly for exemption from the oath in becoming naturalized, a privilege which had already been granted the Quakers and Mennonites throughout the province of Pennsylvania.

As a clue to family historians we may herewith list the names of some of these brethren in the Northkill congregation by the year 1752, viz., Jacob Burkey, Jacob Burkey, Jr., Hans and Stephen Kurtz, Jacob and John Hochstetler, Christian Fisher, Christian, Jacob, and Isaac Kauffman, Christian and Samuel Keonig, Hans Lantz, Jacob and John Mast, Jacob, Christian, Daniel, and John Miller, Christian and Jacob Stutzman, Christian, Jacob, John, and Christian, Jr., Yoder, Christian, Maritz and Hans Zug, and Melchior Detweiler.

Later through Indian depredations Amish congregations were founded in Berks, Bedford, and Chester counties, Pennsyl-

vania. The three additional congregations in Berks County were the Tulpehocken Valley near Womelsdorf, Maiden Creek Valley in the vicinity of Shillington, and the Conestoga Valley near Morgantown, which was founded in 1760 and became the first permanent colony in America.

After 1740 all Amish immigrants and some of those who had come earlier into the Oley Valley also living in Berks County pushed northward into the present localities of Hamburg, Shartlesville, Mohrsville, Shoemakersville, Centreport, and Shillington. Here at the banks of the Northkill and the Maiden Creek they were organized into their first congregation by Bishop Jacob Hertzler who was commissioned by their brethren in Switzerland to become their first pastor and leader. He arrived among them in 1749 and purchased a tract of land near Hamburg. Here he erected farm buildings and lived the remaining half of his life.

This early colony had suffered mercilessly from the Indians between the dates of 1754 and 1764 when the French had incited the savages to go back and reclaim the land. Space will not permit in these columns to relate the various Indian assaults and especially to tell of one bloody massacre among them in 1757.

Our hearts are often touched with sadness, sympathy, and reverence as we occasionally walk the pavement around the northeast corner of Fifth and Washington streets in Reading, the county seat of Berks, where once stood the old county jail which was built in 1752.

Should we be privileged to see the very stones and timbers, if they could speak they would tell the legends of crime and of the imprisonment of our early Amish pioneers. Imagination lends a certain fascination to any ancient ruin, even though this spot has become the location of the city's most modern hotel, the Abraham Lincoln.

Here the writer's great-great-great-grandfather, Christian Zug, or Zook, and a brother, John, with Christian Schmucker, Jacob Mast, Jacob and Stephen Kauffman, John Hertzler, and others were severely tried during the dark days of the Revolutionary War as they were drafted into service and refused to bear arms on account of their nonresistant faith. So many of these Amish brethren were arrested, taken to Reading, Pennsylvania, and there imprisoned, that their women were compelled to work in the fields to support their families.

In the Schmucker family throughout the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana there is still a traditional story that has been handed down among members of this house of Smuckers, as it is variously spelled today. However, Mother Schmucker's maiden name was Catharine Hessler. A very noble and pious woman whose heart was in close sympathy with the fate of her husband, she carried the meals from the old stone farm house which is still standing in Wyomissing, a suburb of Reading, to her

husband in prison. A little grandson named Christian, 1775-1857, belonging to the family of her eldest child, John Schmucker, followed her daily as she carried the meals to her husband at Fifth and Washington streets. They were mocked and gazed upon with reproach by the town boys along the street. Occasionally these boys threw stones at them.

After a speedy trial these brethren were sentenced to death, and the day of execution was set. A meeting was held in the Reading prison to administer the Lord's Supper to the condemned brethren. Bishop Jacob Hertzler resided seventeen miles north from his imprisoned members. But the execution was never carried into effect. Through the leading of a kind Providence friends interfered, particularly Henry Hertzell, a pastor in the German Reformed Church, who interested himself in their behalf and made a strong, personal appeal to the authorities for the freedom of these innocent, unassuming, and quiet people. The ground of Pastor Hertzell's appeal was that these people had fled from Europe to escape military service and that they could not now be expected to do what their conscience forbade them to do in Europe. The appeal, coming from the source it did, made a deep impression on those in authority, and the prisoners were granted their freedom. However, they had to buy their freedom by paying for substitutes, which worked a considerable hardship. One of the persons released, John Hertzler, paid a tax of 104 pounds and 2 shillings, a fine of 104 pounds, and a collection fee of one pound and 6 shillings, a total of 209 pounds and 8 shillings.

The afore-mentioned Henry Hertzell was born in 1738, but his birthplace has not yet been found. He first appeared in the old Huguenot church in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, prior to 1772. About 1774 we meet him in Jacobs Church, Jacksonville, Lynn Township, Lehigh County, and at various churches throughout Lehigh and Berks counties after 1795. He was tall and stout in stature and a mason by trade. Some folks held him in derision because he may have been inferior to his fellow ministers in theological training, but he concluded that he was just as capable to build the kingdom of God as to build houses, although as a minister he was never admitted to the Coetus.

The noble Christian qualities in the life of Henry Hertzell compel today the utmost respect and admiration of thousands of lineal descendants who emanate from their father of the Colonial period, as well as others such as Lord Beatus and William, Prince of Orange, who in 1761 had showed favors to a persecuted group of Anabaptists, among whom was Hans Zaug, a Mennonite preacher and ancestor of Christian and John Zug who were imprisoned in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Elverson, Pa.

## Index of Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Conference Resolutions

MELVIN GINGERICH

### *Mennonite Research Foundation*

During the past year, Brother Delbert Erb, working for the Mennonite Research Foundation, prepared an index of Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Conference Resolutions for the use of conference officials and others who wish to study the position of our churches on various issues. The index arranged alphabetically by subjects concerning which there have been considerable resolutions lists the name of the conference, the year of meeting, and the page in the report of each resolution on the subject. For example, under "Children's Homes," twenty-two resolutions are listed, under "Holding Public Office" there are eighty-five, and under the "Holy Kiss" there are twenty-five.

A copy of the index is on file in the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library, where it may be used by the public. If there is sufficient demand for copies from the readers of the *Gospel Herald*, the work will be mimeographed and made available for \$1.00. Those interested should communicate their desire to the writer of the article.

Although more than eight hundred separate annual or biennial conference reports are on file in the Mennonite Historical Library and the Mennonite Church Archives, all of which have been indexed, a number of important conference reports are missing from the collection.

Among the missing are the following:

- Alberta-Saskatchewan, 1910
- Illinois, 1874, 1879-1881, 1883-1884, 1886, 1888, 1920
- Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite, 1886
- Kansas-Nebraska, 1878-1879, 1881-1887
- Missouri-Iowa, 1873-1874, 1876-1882, 1884-1885
- Ohio, Before 1884, 1885-1887
- Ohio and Eastern A.M., 1941-1943
- Ontario, Before 1842, 1843-1846, 1848-1879, 1881, 1885-1888
- Ontario Amish Mennonite, 1924, 1940-1951
- Pacific Coast, 1916
- Southwestern Pa., Before 1879
- Washington Co.-Franklin Co., Before 1884, 1885-1910, 1912, 1914, 1918-1925, 1927-1950
- Virginia, 1836-1859, 1861-1862, 1873, 1879

It will be a great service to the Archives of the Mennonite Church if you will make available to us any of the above reports. Please send them to the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

## News And Notes

A recent request in the *Gospel Herald* of the Custodian of the Mennonite Church Archives for collections of church bulletins issued by Mennonite congregations during the past year has brought a praiseworthy response. An increasingly large number of Mennonite congregations are periodically submitting complete sets of bulletins to the Archives.

\* \* \*

Mrs. George Lapp has deposited part of the papers of her late husband in the Archives of the Mennonite Church in accordance with the wishes of Brother Lapp, who had arranged most of his files for transfer during the last months of his life. The materials deposited include sermon outlines, manuscripts of addresses and lectures which he had given, manuscripts of magazine articles and books which he had written, and some correspondence.

\* \* \*

The secretary's minute books of the Mennonite Board of Education for the years 1939-1949—the period of service as secretary of Brother C. F. Yake—have been deposited with other records of the Board in the Archives, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

\* \* \*

The Holdeman Mennonite congregation of Wakarusa, Indiana, has recently deposited the minutes of its young people's meetings for the years 1939 to 1949 in the Archives of the Mennonite Church. Records previously deposited by the Holdeman congregation included Sunday school and literary society secretary's books.

\* \* \*

The papers of J. M. Kreider, late bishop in the South Central Mennonite Conference district, were deposited in the Archives of the Mennonite Church in 1949. The collection includes correspondence, certificates of Brother Kreider's ordination as a minister at Paradise, Pennsylvania, in 1898, and as a bishop at Cherry Box, Missouri, in 1912, and a few other papers. A partial list of marriage ceremonies performed by Brother Kreider includes the marriage of Daniel Kauffman, late editor of the *Gospel Herald*, and Mary C. Shank.

\* \* \*

Several valuable collections of materials have recently been deposited in the Mennonite Church Archives located in the Goshen College Library. Among them are ten boxes of M. S. Steiner correspondence, deposited there by the Steiner family. These letters have great value for those who wish to trace the growth of the missionary program of the Mennonite Church.

\* \* \*

One of the most valuable sets of conference records received to date by the Mennonite Church Archives contains the handwritten secretary's record of the Amish Mennonite Conference of Ohio and



Pennsylvania subsequently called the Eastern A.M. Conference for the period 1891 through 1927 and the typed records of the Ohio Mennonite Conference from 1897 through 1924. These were deposited by Stanford Mumaw.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Phoebe M. Kolb, Kitchener, Ontario, has recently added photographs to her excellent collection of old portraits in the Mennonite Church Archives.

\* \* \*

Nelson P. Springer is again employed half time by the Mennonite Church Archives, after having spent a year in the University of Illinois Library School. His time is given to the sorting, arranging, and classifying of materials received by the Archives during recent years. He also serves as librarian of the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library.

\* \* \*

The Mennonite Research Fellowship met at Messiah Bible College on June 13, 1951. This organization comprised of working scholars in the field of Mennonite history and life voted into its fellowship the following persons: Erland Waltner, Paul Shelly, John Hostetler, Elmer Suderman, M. S. Harder, and Leland Harder. The discussion of the group centered around the topic, "Opportunities for Research on the Mennonites in Russia."

\* \* \*

Members present at the meeting included H. S. Bender, Melvin Gingerich, Cornelius Krahn, J. C. Wenger, John Umble, J. W. Fretz, M. S. Harder, Paul Shelly, and John Hostetler. Those absent were S. C. Yoder, G. F. Hershberger, J. D. Unruh, Ed. G. Kaufman, S. F. Pannabecker, Delbert Gratz, Elmer Suderman, Erland Waltner, Robert Friedmann, and Leland Harder.

\* \* \*

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mennonite Research Foundation was held at Goshen College on September 20, 1951. Copies of the annual report of the Director of Research are available to interested persons. It was decided that the major emphasis of the year is to be placed upon the completion of the history of Mennonite relief work by G. F. Hershberger, upon the interpretation of the statistics of the Mennonite Family Census by Melvin Gingerich, and upon the Mennonite Outreach Study by John A. Hostetler, who has been employed half time for the school year to work on this project. This study is to center on the effectiveness of the methods employed to win those of non-Mennonite background to the Mennonite Church and to hold them for the church.

\* \* \*

During August Mrs. Gertrude Enders Huntington, who is a graduate student in the new department of conservation at Yale University, spent a week in the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library working on the topic, "Mennonite

Contributions to Land Use." The materials she is gathering will be used in the writing of her thesis and also in a book by Fairfield Osborn.

\* \* \*

Frank J. Wray spent several weeks during the summer in the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library and Mennonite Church Archives working on his dissertation for the History Department at Yale. His subject is "The Anabaptist Philosophy of History."

\* \* \*

Alice K. Gingerich, daughter of Daniel Kauffman, is completing her manuscript for a biography on the life of her father who was for many years the editor of the *Gospel Herald*. She spent several days during August in the Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library and Mennonite Church Archives checking correspondence and other records pertaining to the life and work of Kauffman.

\* \* \*

Barbara Coffman, granddaughter of J. S. Coffman, spent several days during August working in the Mennonite Church Archives for the purpose of gathering materials to be used in her book on the life of her grandfather. Especially valuable for her study was the correspondence between M. S. Steiner and J. S. Coffman contained in the newly acquired Steiner collection.

\* \* \*

J. Winfield Fretz of Bethel College returned from Latin America in October. He had a commission from the Mennonite Central Committee to study the Mennonite communities established in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In addition he studied the life stories of refugees living in Latin America who had escaped from communist Russia. The latter study was done under a grant by the Social Science Research Council.

\* \* \*

Dr. Cornelius Krahn of Bethel College visited the Mennonite colonies of Canada for the purpose of interviewing recent immigrants who have escaped from Russia. This is part of the study undertaken jointly by Dr. Krahn and Dr. Fretz under the grant from the Social Science Research Council. Dr. Krahn reports that although the refugees are extremely reluctant to put down their experiences in writing they have no hesitation in answering questions asked them and in giving lengthy oral summaries of their experiences. The interviews are recorded on wire recordings and then later typed by secretaries who know the German language well.

\* \* \*

Miss Annamarie Krause is continuing her study of the adaptation of the Russian Mennonites to the semitropical climate of Paraguay. During the past year she spent a period of time in Paraguay. Her work is being done under the Geography Department of Chicago University. Her topic is "A Middle Latitude Culture in a Tropical Environment."

## How a Local Historical Society Was Recently Started

The new Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa illustrates how a few concerned individuals can render a most valuable kind of service. For some years Elmer G. Swartzendruber, L. Glen Guengerich and Dan B. Swartzendruber (now deceased) felt something should be done to preserve historical records and to create an interest in local Mennonite history. According to a report they talked over the idea as guests at a dinner and then decided to take action.

On September 7, 1948, a preliminary meeting was held at the home of Elmer G. Swartzendruber near Wellman. Articles of incorporation were read and the purposes of such a society discussed. Temporary officers were Thomas Miller, president; L. Glen Guengerich, vice president; and Erma Erb, secretary. The society has since been permanently organized.

According to Erma Erb this community is unique in that it has over 100 years of unbroken church records. It was the desire to preserve these records that led to the formation of a society. The young society sponsors programs and encourages the collection of incidents on local history, historical relics and also considers publishing works on historical facts. In its collection are such items as a map of the homes of the community and a diary dating back to 1906.

## 1951-1952 History Contest Will Be Larger

Three levels of students instead of only two will participate in the John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest. They will be (1) high school; (2) college; (3) college senior and postgraduate. Any student on these levels who is registered during 1951-1952 is eligible though mature young people not in school may enter the high school contest.

First prize in the college senior and post-graduate group will be \$10.00. The first prize for college students and also for high-school students will be \$5.00. Second and third prizes will be a year's subscription to the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and to the *MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN*.

Subject matter may be anything relating to Mennonite history. Original and careful work is necessary. All essays are to be mailed to Grant M. Stoltzfus, Scottsdale, Pa., before midnight, April 15, 1952. Further inquiries about the contest should be directed to him.

The contest is sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference.



# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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No. 2



From an Old Photograph at Elkhart, Indiana

The wives of three ministers posed for this picture which was reproduced from an undated photograph. Left to right: Mrs. Samuel Yoder, Mrs. J. S. Coffman, Mrs. J. S. Lehman.

## A History of the Spring Valley Congregation Kenmare, North Dakota

EDWARD L. KAUFFMAN

Before 1870 there was not much settlement in what is now North Dakota because the Indians were warlike and transportation was poor. In 1870 railroads were built across the fertile Red River Valley. Stories about the wonderful wheat crops in North Dakota made their way back east. Soon after immigrants began arriving from many European countries, mainly from northern Europe countries. In 1881 the Northern Pacific Railroad reached the Montana border and in 1887 the Great Northern reached as far westward as Minot. The disappearance of the Indians and the opening of transportation with the accompanying propaganda by the railroad companies and opportunity for homesteading brought many immigrants from other states as well as from Europe.

Perhaps it cannot be determined when the first Mennonite family moved to

North Dakota. (There is a record of Amish families in Rollette County in 1894.) The obituary of John J. Kauffman in the *Herald of Truth* (Nov. 25, 1905) states that he moved to North Dakota in 1889. This, however, is a typographical error and should have been 1899. One of the first Mennonite families to locate in North Dakota was Daniel B. Kauffman, son of John J. Kauffman mentioned above, who with his wife made the 1200-mile trip from Cass County, Missouri, to Kenmare, North Dakota, with team and wagon in the summer of 1889.

Daniel Kauffman staked a homestead on the quarter section of land southwest of where the church building was later located. This location was seven miles south of Kenmare which at that time was in its beginning. To the east of Kauffman's homestead about four miles was a railroad station which at that time was called Galva. The first correspondence in the *Herald of Truth* from this community is addressed from here.<sup>1</sup>

Other families soon followed the Daniel Kauffman family. In the winter of 1899-1900 John J. Kauffmans moved here from Cass County, Missouri, and Lew Morningstar and family from Indiana. Gideon Sharp and Menno B. Detwiler with their

families arrived in the following spring from Cass County, Missouri.

There were no Sunday school or church services until in the summer of 1901 when a union Sunday school was started. These services were held in a school-house. Occasional preaching services were held with Methodist, Evangelical, Lutheran, and Mennonite ministers taking charge.

The first communion service for Mennonite members was held in the spring of 1902 with Bro. J. J. Hartzler from Garden City, Missouri, officiating. Eleven members took part in this first service.

In 1903 Bro. David D. Zook of Newton, Kansas, held a series of evangelistic meetings and six more members were added by baptism to the group. Members were later added by letter so that by the spring of 1905 there were twenty-five members.

The first correspondence from the group at Kenmare which I was able to find was in the *Herald of Truth*, Feb. 26, 1903.

GALVA, N. DAK.—We as a little brotherhood are located a few miles South of Kenmare along the Soo railroad. We have good soil and cheap fuel. We invite



those anticipating a change in their location to come and see us before locating. We would be glad to have any of our ministers, passing through the state, to visit us. We are but few members and seldom hear the gospel preached. Asking an interest in your prayers,

I remain your brother in the faith,

D. B. Kauffman.

Another settlement of Mennonites was forming near Minot, North Dakota. This location is also designated as Surrey. Minot is located about 50 miles southeast of Kenmare. The Mennonite settlers here were largely from the Big Valley in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. They came in a group and brought their minister with them. From the *Herald of Truth* I quote the following:<sup>2</sup>

ALLENSVILLE, PA.—As about twenty or more of our members will move to Surrey, North Dakota, in the near future, we believe it has been wisely decided to hold communion services on March 15th, and with the help of God to ordain a minister from among the colony who contemplate moving to that place. By the kind providence of God they expect to hold church services, Sunday School and Bible meetings regularly every Sunday as soon as they arrive at their destination. May the grace and richest blessings of God rest and abide forever on the new church. Cor.

Bro. Isaac Mast was the minister who was ordained. He was the first minister of the Mennonite church to settle in North Dakota.<sup>3</sup> He ministered to the group at Surrey and made a monthly appointment at Kenmare until a minister was ordained at that place. In October, 1904, Bro. J. M. Hartzler was ordained to the ministry to assist Bro. Mast.

On October 4, 1904, Bro. Daniel B. Kauffman was ordained to the ministry at Kenmare and Bro. Amos C. Ogburn was ordained to the office of deacon.<sup>4</sup> Bro. Sam Lapp of South English, Iowa, officiated in these ordinations. At this time it was also decided to erect a church building. Upon their organization both congregations were admitted into the Missouri-Iowa Conference District.

The charter members of the Spring Valley Congregation (Kenmare) were:

Detwiler, Sadie	Ogburn, Amos C.
Kauffman, D. B.	Ogburn, Lydia
Kauffman, Mattie	Ogburn, Charles
Kauffman, John J.	Ogburn, Anna
Kauffman, Martha	Ogburn, Ottis
Kauffman, Alpha	Renno, Samuel G.
Kauffman, Joseph	Sharp, Gideon
Kauffman, Willie	Sharp, Salina
Morningstar, Lew M.	Sharp, Nettie
Morningstar, Fannie	Sharp, Elmer
Morningstar, Arthur	Wenger, Chris
Miller, Fannie	Weaver, Jerry
	Weaver, Alice

The building which was begun in the fall of 1904 was completed in the spring of 1905. A correspondence note in the *Herald of Truth*<sup>5</sup> reads as follows:

BADEN, N. DAK., April 30, 1905.—We have our new meeting house completed and held the first services Saturday evening, March 17 and on Sunday, March 18, held a Sunday School Conference. On the 26 of March we organized our Sunday School, also young people's meeting. On Sunday, April 2, we held our first Sunday School. Alpha Kauffman.

In 1908 Bro. I. S. Mast of Surrey was ordained to the office of bishop to serve the two congregations. In a *Gospel Herald* editorial appears the following note:<sup>6</sup>

BISHOP ORDAINED—Bro. I. S. Mast of Surrey, North Dakota, was ordained bishop on June 21. Bishop Daniel Kauffman of Versailles, Mo., officiating. He is the first and only bishop in the state and will serve the congregations in that vicinity. The prayers of the people are with the brother in his high and responsible position.<sup>7</sup>

Bro. I. S. Mast served as the only bishop in the Dakota district until the ordination of Bro. Eli G. Hochstetler at Wolford, North Dakota, in 1926. Until he moved from the district in 1941 he served diligently and gave unstintingly of his service in spite of many privations.

Bro. D. B. Kauffman served as the only minister until in 1912 when Bro. Levi A. Kauffman moved from Fairview, Michigan. Levi A. Kauffman helped in the ministry here until in 1916 at which time he moved to Coalridge, Montana.

In 1919 D. B. Kauffman moved to Hubbard, Oregon, and the congregation was without a resident minister for two years. On October 30, 1921, Bro. Joseph L. Lehman was ordained to this office and served in this capacity for seven years. On October 10, 1928, Bro. Lehman met with an accident which resulted in his death and the small flock was again without a shepherd.

On April 14, 1929, Bro. Archie Kauffman was ordained to the ministry and served in that capacity until the fall of 1937 when he moved to Molalla, Oregon. By this time the membership was quite small and no minister was ordained after this time.

Bro. Amos C. Ogburn moved to Westover, Maryland, in 1916 and no other deacon was ordained until in 1926 when Bro. Levi C. Kauffman was called to that office. Bro. Levi C. Kauffman moved away in 1939 at which time only two members were left.

While the congregation existed it was active and aggressive. It supported the work of the church and its various institutions. For a number of years the congregation formed a number of acres as a "God's acre" project. This was in the years of drouth and depression and was not greatly successful from a financial standpoint. It is certain that the same amount of time and effort in the nineteen forties would have yielded thousands of dollars.

By October 1, 1939, there were only two members remaining in the com-

munity, Bro. and Sister W. E. Harris. In 1941 they moved to Michigan. And so the community that saw the first Mennonite family arrive in 1899 saw the last Mennonite family leave in 1941. The church building was sold and moved away. It is no longer used for religious services. There remains a cemetery which contains a score or more of tombstones and some unmarked graves.

The community is more sparsely settled now than formerly. Land has gone into the hands of a few and is being farmed on a larger scale.

The Spring Valley congregation has not died out. It has only dispersed. Today it lives in the hearts and lives of many people throughout the United States—in Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, California, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Missouri, and other places. Those who moved away did not forsake their greater loyalty. They were cautious in choosing only locations where they and their families could have church privileges and where they could have opportunities to witness for the Lord. Heaven alone can reveal the eternal values which have resulted from the work of the faithful ones who labored during these forty-two years in this community where the Spring Valley Church once stood.

In the very hour in which I finish this paper (May 12, 1949) begins the funeral service of one of the charter members of the congregations, Salina Sharp Hartzler, at Fairview, Michigan. Of the twenty-five charter members at least thirteen are yet living.

<sup>1</sup> *Herald of Truth*, Feb. 26, 1903, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Herald of Truth*, March 19, 1903, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Bro. Mast was the first minister of the (Old) Mennonite Church to settle in North Dakota. The Amish were settling in Rollette County and quite probably may have had a minister before this time.

<sup>4</sup> There is some question as to the exact date of the ordination but safely within the period of October 4-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Herald of Truth*, May 11, 1905, p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> *Gospel Herald*, July 4, 1908, p. 216.

<sup>7</sup> An Amish bishop is referred to in *Herald of Truth*, Sept. 24, 1903, p. 306.

## Family Histories

One of the latest family histories to come to our attention is that of the Albrecht genealogy. According to Mrs. Henry C. Albrecht of Ohio, Illinois, the new Albrecht book is nearly complete and is due to go to the printers soon. It will contain pictures and is to be indexed. The estimated cost is around \$2.00.

\* \* \*

The Historical Library at Scottsdale has many valuable genealogies. Yet here and there we learn of new or revised genealogies of Mennonite families. Readers of the BULLETIN will render a worthwhile service by letting us know of such works and passing copies on to the Scottsdale library.



## Another Landmark

NOAH BONTRAGER

I am very much impressed with a landmark near Jet, Oklahoma, where there are only a few gravestones marking the place where lie my companion and two children, with about ten others. These compose the landmark of the Milan Valley Church. Then one wonders if the short life of that church has made the right landmark for the people of that community to follow.

I think the church at Milan Valley was at one time a real lighthouse to guide souls to Christ. When that part of Oklahoma first opened on the 16th day of September, 1893, my brother Chris with two or three of his friends went into the race, each of them to take a farm. Then about one and a half years after that my father went down from Kansas and bought one of these young men out. This young man had built a sod shanty about 12 x 16 and a dugout, one half in the ground and the other half out of ground about 12 x 14. My father gave \$150.00 for 160 acres. I well remember the first church services we had were in this dugout. About the year 1895 there were four families there with ten or eleven children. Then Bro. S. C. Miller from West Liberty Church near Windom, Kansas, came there and held the first services. I don't remember just how many services we did have in this dugout, but quite a number, because I remember Father made some benches to sit on because we had not enough chairs to seat all of us, probably for six or eight months.

We had revival meetings in our schoolhouse with J. M. R. Weaver as evangelist. That was when I accepted Christ as my Saviour. Then others kept moving in until we needed more room; after that we built a small church house on the southeast corner of Father's farm.

Bro. Miller used to drive down from his home in McPherson County, Kansas, to Milan Valley with a pair of dun ponies, a distance of about 150 miles. Then for quite some time he drove a pair of black ponies. So the church grew, with Bro. Miller as our bishop for about five years, with visiting ministers from other places as Newton, Peabody, and Harper, Kansas, coming in and preaching for us. Then Bro. Philip Zimmerman was ordained deacon in about the year 1901. About this time Bro. Tobias Hershberger (aged deacon) and family moved in from Tennessee. Then in the summer of 1902 we ordained two ministers — Bro. Simon Hershberger (son of the aged deacon) and Bro. George Landis, who had moved in from Kansas with a large family. This church was then too small and so we built a larger one just a half mile north from the little church on Bro. N. E. Miller's farm. This was about 1908 (see picture). Bro. J. M. R. Weaver preached the dedication for the new church. We had revival meetings by Bro. Jacob

Winey, Bro. Reuben Weaver, and Bro. J. E. Hartzler. By this time there were some over sixty members there with 19 or 20 young folks and about 15 or 18 children, just a good prospect for a good church. In about 1909 or 1910 we had the Kansas-Nebraska conference at Milan Valley. We had S.S. conferences, singing schools, Y.P.B.M., and plenty of activities. But in spite of all that, there is only a landmark left. I am not blaming any certain one or any certain group for this, because it may be one of God's mysterious ways His wonders to perform. I think of Bro. Simon as a good example for being the last one to leave that community. I am very glad that the church building is still in use by the brotherhood in Hutchinson, Kansas. It was moved up there in 1941.

Elkhart, Indiana

(Edited by N. P. Springer)

## History of the the Bethel Church, Cass County, Missouri

In the year 1860, the Solomon Yoder family of Ohio moved to Cass County, Missouri, locating south of East Lynne. Eighteen months later the family returned to Ohio, the father having enlisted in the army. C. P. Yoder, a brother of Solomon, came from Ohio as far as Independence, Missouri, by rail, and there he employed a Negro with an ox to bring Mrs. Yoder and children to Independence, where he joined them and accompanied them to Ohio. After the war, Solomon Yoder joined his family in Ohio and with them returned to Missouri, in 1865. In the same year the brother, C. P. Yoder and family of Ohio, and Jacob King and family of Michigan, moved to Cass County, locating south of East Lynne.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1866, the Abraham Yoder and Stephen Kauffman families of Michigan and David Sharp family of Illinois, and also Bishop Jacob C. Kenagy and family of Logan County, Ohio, established new homes in Cass County. Soon after Bishop Kenagy's arrival he conducted preaching services in the home of C. P. Yoder.

The Ruben Yoder and the John Kenagy families from Michigan, and the Isaac King family from Ohio, joined the fast-growing Amish Mennonite settlement in 1867. The following spring the Solomon D. King family of Ohio, the Isaac M. Yoder family of Michigan, and J. K. Zook family of Pennsylvania, also established new homes in Cass County, locating near East Lynne.<sup>2</sup>

In the year 1868, Bishop Jacob C. Kenagy organized the Clearfork Church, and a building was erected on the C. P. Yoder farm with a cemetery adjoining. May 14, 1871, the first Sunday school was organized with David Sharp as superintendent and Jacob B. Schrock as secretary.<sup>3</sup>

There had been a progressive Amish congregation organized from among such members of the Sycamore Amish congregation, Cass County, Missouri, as desired more liberty than was granted them by the old congregation. They invited Coffman to hold meetings for them. He went, preached spiritual life, regeneration, and ordinances, and succeeded in regaining a congregation that was fast drifting into worldliness. During the eighties they organized themselves into Bethel Church and built a commodious house of worship near Garden City.

The above-mentioned Amish congregation referred to, was a following of Benjamin Eicher of Iowa. For some time the Clearfork church building was used alternately by the two congregations.

In 1883, Bishop J. C. Kenagy, with his congregation, built a larger church known as Sycamore Grove congregation, three-fourths mile northeast of the Clearfork Church.

Soon after this the pastor of the Progressive Amish Church moved from Missouri, leaving the congregation without a pastor. It was at this time when J. S. Coffman was invited here. The result was such an awakening that gave the founding to the Bethel Church.

The Bethel Church was organized by Bishop J. S. Coffman in 1886, with sixteen charter members. The charter members are as follows: Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Zook, Mr. and Mrs. I. B. King, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Plank, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Greaser, Mr. and Mrs. Christian Kauffman, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Shepp, Mr. J. C. King, Mrs. C. P. Yoder, and Mr. and Mrs. Saul Byler (all deceased).

At this time the church had no resident minister. Bishop David Kauffman and Daniel Driver of Versailles, Morgan County, Missouri, filled the appointment of preaching services once each month. Sunday school was held each week with I. B. King as superintendent.

The first year of the new congregation showed a great increase in members. The second year was begun with an enrolment of forty members.

Due to the fact that it was no longer expedient for both congregations to use the same building, Clearfork Church, for a place of worship, it was decided to build a new building. Bro. I. B. King, C. Kauffman, and S. L. Byler were elected trustees before the building of the new church. This same year, 1887, a tract of land was secured from C. L. Clark upon which to build the church. It is located two miles n.w. of Garden City.

As early as 1898, Bethel Church began and developed systematic extension work. Bro. I. B. King was given charge of the Sunday-school work at Belton, Missouri. Appointments were also filled at Olathe, Kansas. At the Wallace schoolhouse extension services were also held alternately with Sycamore Grove. For the past several years Sycamore and Bethel have been sponsoring services one Sunday afternoon each month at the county home.

Bishop David Kauffman of Versailles,



Missouri, had bishop oversight of the congregation from the time it was organized until the time of his death in August, 1896.

Bro. Daniel D., son of Bishop David Kauffman, was ordained to the bishopric at conference time, September, 1896. From that time on, he had bishop oversight until Bro. J. C. Driver was ordained to the bishopric in the fall of 1912. Bro. Kauffman was a resident here during the school years from September, 1895, to June, 1897, after which time he made a point to spend some time with the congregation several times a year.

Before a resident minister was located, the church was supplied by Bishop David Kauffman and co-worker Daniel F. Driver of Morgan County.

Bro. L. J. Heatwole of Virginia moved here and took charge of the church as minister in 1890. He was ordained to the bishopric in 1892, the same day and place that Daniel Y. Hooley was ordained to the ministry by Bishop David Kauffman. Because of his wife's health Bro. Heatwole moved back to Virginia in 1893.

Bro. Daniel F. Yoder of Johnson County, Iowa, moved here in 1890, and served as minister for a period of four years.

Bro. D. Y. Hooley was ordained to the ministry in 1892 and served the church, then he, with his family, moved to California where a colony of Mennonites had settled.

Bro. A. D. Wenger of Virginia was ordained to the ministry in 1894 by Bishop David Kauffman and served the church until Bishop Daniel Kauffman became a resident at this place.

Bro. J. B. Smith of Ohio was given a call by the church in 1898 and served the church as minister for two years.

Bro. C. S. Hauder and family of Culom, Illinois, moved here in 1899 and was minister until the time of his death in 1909.

Bro. J. E. Hartzler was ordained to the ministry September 4, 1905, as co-worker with Brother Hauder until he entered the evangelistic work. After the death of Bro. Hauder the church was without a minister. The way opened and the vacancy was supplied by Bro. W. E. Helmuth of Oklahoma, who with his family moved here in the fall of 1909, and has continued to serve the church as minister to the present time.

In the spring of 1912, Bro. J. C. Driver and family of Larned, Kansas, moved here and was co-worker with Bro. Helmuth. He was ordained to the bishopric in fall of 1912 by Bishop Daniel D. Kauffman and has served in that capacity until the present time.

In 1917, Bro. D. S. King and family of Tuleta, Texas, moved here and was active in the ministry until time of death in 1930.

The first deacon was Bro. Eli Kauffman who was ordained in 1889.

Bro. I. B. King was ordained to the office of deacon in 1893.

Bro. E. W. Byler was ordained in the fall of 1907 and served the church until he moved to Kansas in 1910.

Bro. J. B. Yoder was ordained June 26, 1910, and has served the church until the present time (1935).

<sup>1</sup> Records of J. B. Yoder, deacon of Bethel congregation.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Schrock's and I. G. Hartzler's records, Sycamore congregation.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop I. G. Hartzler's records.

<sup>4</sup> M. S. Steiner, *Life of J. S. Coffman*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. N. Shepp's records.

<sup>6</sup> Church Record, p. 22, Jan. 8, 1898.

## Book Reviews

*The Story of the Amish in Civilian Public Service*, edited by David Wagler and Roman Raber (no place, no publisher) 1945. 140 pp.

This 150-page paper-bound book was edited and compiled by David Wagler and Roman Raber, two Amish young men, while they were in Civilian Public Service Camp at Boonsboro, Maryland, in 1945. In the Foreword their "aim and prayer is that this book will help to draw closer the ties connecting one to another and that each one may be strengthened in his faith and his trust in God."

In the introduction, Eli J. Bontrager, a bishop of the Old Order Amish, who during the war kept in close contact with the work of the Mennonite Central Committee and the Civilian Public Service program, registers his concern for the young men of his group, who were at that time in CPS and also gives a brief evaluation of the CPS program.

Pages 11 to 79 contain numerous accounts by various men of incidents and experiences that seemed outstanding in their CPS life. David Wagler gives us a "Peep at Camp Life" in which he describes many of the numerous everyday experiences common to many of the men in various camps. Abraham Graber relates an account of the work of CPS boys from the Denison, Iowa, camp during the flood at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in April, 1943, while Amos K. Fisher tells about the flood along the Yellowstone River in Montana in March, 1943, in which he and others from the Terry, Montana, camp gave valuable aid in repairing damage to railroads in that valley. Henry S. Swartzentruber tells "The Tale of Doris Dean," a thrilling story of the search and rescue of a four-year-old girl lost in the Blue Ridge Mountains near the Grottoes, Virginia, camp. Others tell of their experiences in detached service on a dairy farm, on lookout towers, in fighting forest fires, as a smoke jumper's cook, in mental hospital wards, as human guinea pigs, on the Florida hookworm control project, and relief work in Puerto Rico. These sketches all combine to give one a general view of the work done by conscientious objectors in Civilian Public Service. The reader can also feel their

sense of gratitude to God, to the government, and the various church groups who made it possible for them to do useful work instead of taking part in military service, which to these young Amish men, as well as to most conscientious objectors, is contrary to the example and teaching of Christ, and therefore a sin in which they can have no part.

Following these sketches is a section entitled, "From the Papers," consisting of quotations from various periodicals voicing opinions regarding Civilian Public Service and conscientious objectors, both pro and con. Most of these are reprinted from *The Reporter*.

The remainder of the book, pp. 93 to 140, consists of a directory of the Amish in Civilian Public Service. It is an attempt to list all the Old Order Amish men who were in CPS giving their home address, their marital status, their fathers' names, the place of their induction, and all transfers from one camp to another. In the directory there is also a list of CPS camps operated by the historic peace churches and some blank pages for notes, changes of address, etc.

This book should be of special interest to all the Amish young men who were in CPS and may be read with interest and appreciation by many persons who were connected with the program. It might even be well for some of those who criticized the CPS program to read this book and note the sincerity and steadfastness of purpose that characterized these men. The directory is of special interest to some of the Amish boys and historians. The rest of the book may be read with profit by all.

Goshen, Indiana. Milton Gascho.

## News and Notes

A recent request in the *Gospel Herald* of the Custodian of the Mennonite Church Archives for collections of church bulletins issued by Mennonite congregations during the past year has brought a praiseworthy response. An increasingly large number of Mennonite congregations are periodically submitting complete sets of bulletins to the Archives.

\* \* \*

*Writings on Pennsylvania History* is a 565 page bibliography issued in 1946 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission of Harrisburg, Pa. It lists over 6,000 items on the history of Pennsylvania and is the joint work of many scholars over years of time. Over two pages of the bibliography are devoted to Mennonite and Amish works. Writings on the various counties of the state are likewise listed and any Mennonite student or historian who is studying Pennsylvania backgrounds will benefit by having this practical and useful book on hand. Copies may be purchased from the Bureau of Publications, Harrisburg, Pa. *Writings on Pennsylvania History* should be in our church school libraries.



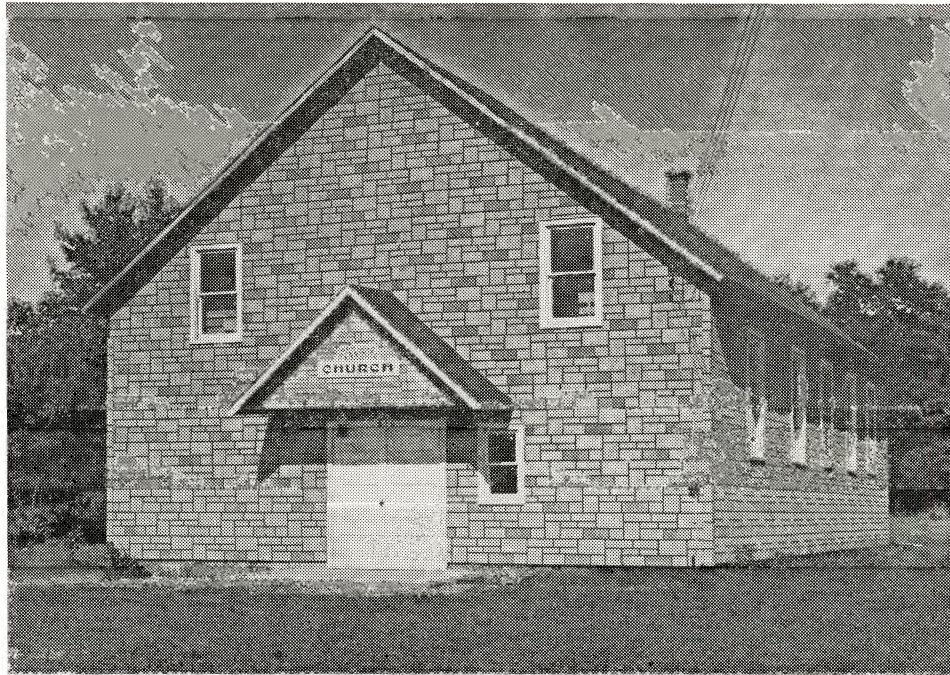
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WHITE CLOUD MENNONITE CHURCH  
WHITE CLOUD, MICHIGAN

## History of the White Cloud Mennonite Church at White Cloud, Michigan

*Presented at Dedication Service  
for the new church building  
May 18, 1952*

WINIFRED NELSON BEECHY

White Cloud, Michigan, is located in Newaygo County, about fifty miles north of Grand Rapids on highway M 37. The first Mennonite families to settle in this region were those of Christian Dester and Eli Shultz from the Shore congregation at Shipshewana, Indiana. Dester and Shultz together owned apparatus for pulling stumps, and they came in the summer of 1896 to work at that occupation. Lumbering operations had left a great deal of this work to do. The families of these two men came a short time later. They were soon followed by others from the same place: Abe Miller, Joseph J. Miller, Joseph Sarver, Isaac Miller, Samuel Jones, Fanny Kauffman, Eli

Zook, D. L. Christophel, Harvey A. Miller, John F. Miller, Thomas B. Nelson, T. U. Nelson, Polly Eash, Katie Yoder, and Jacob P. Miller and Alex Mast. These people all came between 1896 and 1901.

In 1903 began another in-rush of settlers, among which were John C. Springer from Illinois, Daniel Horst, Samuel Madlem, Aaron Smeltzer, Aaron Hartman, Henry Stichter, John Mishler, Henry Rauch, John Rhinesmith, Ephraim Grabbill, John R. Lehman, J. J. Eash, David Livingstone, and others from Shore and Elkhart, Indiana. The number grew to nearly ninety, the highest it has been at any time, and represented four states: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Oklahoma.

As has been seen, the first two families came because of their occupation. Those who followed them, had various reasons. Perhaps the most came for cheap homes. Michigan's great lumbering days were past, leaving a large acreage of stumps. This land was very cheap and attracted them on that basis. In Indiana land was worth one hundred dollars or more per acre. Here many of them bought farms at the rate of three to five dollars per acre. The majority of them were farmers

and came with the intention of making a living in that way.

Some came because of family ties. Such was the case of the Dester family; Polly Eash and Katie Yoder, both widows with families, were sisters of Mrs. Dester. With Joseph J. Miller came his son, John F. Miller, and his daughter, Mrs. T. U. Nelson. In the Thomas B. Nelson family were his son, T. U. Nelson, and two daughters, Mrs. John F. Miller and Mrs. Harvey A. Miller. With J. P. Miller were two daughters and their husbands John C. Springer and Eli Zook. Thus many of the families were inter-related.<sup>1</sup>

Those were the factors which brought them to pioneer in Michigan, but perhaps the reason for their settling in this particular place was the influence of the Amish, who had come here some years before. In March of 1895 Manasses D. Schmucker, his wife and his father-in-law, Samuel Yoder, and family, from Nappanee, Indiana, settled at Diamond Lake, about seven miles north of White Cloud. Preacher Daniel Miller and three or four other families from Lagrange County, Indiana, came the same spring. Others followed until, at the time of the



Mennonites' coming, they numbered about forty, and continued to grow to sixty or seventy. However, the decline of this group was as rapid as its growth, and within a few years the members began moving away, most of them back to Indiana and several to western states. The Ed Hochstetler family remained long after the rest of the group had broken up, and finally in 1836 moved to an Amish community at Nottawa, Michigan. Through the years, a number of Amish families joined the Mennonite Church, namely: the families of M. D. Schmucker, Jonas Chupp, Eli Kuhns, Martin Hochstetler, Manasses D. Miller and Emanuel Hochstetler. Some of these make up a portion of the present congregation while many others have since moved away.<sup>2</sup>

During the first few years of the Mennonites' stay, there were no organized religious services. In 1898, however, a Sunday school was organized which met at the homes of the members during the summer months. Christian Dester acted as superintendent at the informal meetings. The next year a schoolhouse was built in the community known as Pleasant Valley. It was here that the Sunday school was then held. Eli Zook was elected superintendent, and they met every Sunday. There were occasional preaching services conducted by visiting ministers.<sup>3</sup>

In the spring of 1899, a congregation of twenty-two charter members was organized by Bishop P. Y. Lehman and Deacon James Mishler from Goshen, Indiana. In 1900 the little church consisted of thirty-five members. In the spring of that year Jacob P. Miller moved from Indiana, and in July was ordained to the ministry by John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana. In the fall of the same year, his son-in-law, Eli Zook, was ordained deacon. The following year on May 5, 1901, J. P. Miller was ordained bishop by P. Y. Lehman.<sup>4</sup>

The Pleasant Valley region to which the first settlers came and in which the first meetings were held is five miles east of White Cloud and was the center of the first Mennonite settlement. However, in 1903, after the second group of settlers came, the members were more scattered; they had to make their homes farther to the east which took them to the Big Prairie district and on toward the Muskegon River to the area known as Big Bend. Situated on the sands of what was known as Big Prairie Desert, a tract of land covered with sand, sparse grass and an occasional tree, was a church house belonging to Big Prairie and Everett townships. This building, known as the Union Church, was not used regularly, its main purpose being for funerals since there was a cemetery close by. This cemetery has been used by the Mennonites up to the present time. Many of the Mennonites were now nearer this church than the schoolhouse, which was about three miles north and west, and wished to change to this building. A committee

composed of Christian Dester, Levi Yoder, and T. U. Nelson was appointed to investigate the advisability of the change.<sup>5</sup> According to the report of the committee, January 9, 1903, Dester refused to serve, but the other two visited each member and took the vote. The majority favored the change. They were given the use of the building at very small charge on condition that they keep it clean and give way to funerals. Services were held here for eight years until, on the night of July 4, 1911, it was struck by lightning and burned.

One of the central figures in the organization and early years of the church was J. P. Miller. He was born on December 16, 1850, in Cambria County, Pennsylvania. Later he made his home in Lagrange County, Indiana, from which place he came to Michigan in the spring of 1900. He was ordained to the ministry on July 1, 1900, and to the office of bishop on May 5, 1901. He remained at White Cloud until the spring of 1910, when he moved to Elmira, Michigan, where he remained only a year. He then moved back to White Cloud, but after four months went to Bowne, where he had charge as bishop of the Bowne congregation. Several years later he removed to Indiana and was connected with the Shore congregation as its bishop, remaining there until his death in 1927. The church began with him at its head and for the next half century some relative of his served among the leadership. After he left one son-in-law, John C. Springer, served as minister and another, Eli Zook, as deacon. Following them, Harvey A. Miller, husband of a niece, served as deacon and a nephew, T. U. Nelson, as minister.<sup>6</sup>

Eli Zook came to White Cloud from Indiana in the spring of 1899 and was ordained deacon in the fall of 1900. He remained here until the spring of 1910, when he went to Elmira, Michigan, for a year, then to the Bowne church at Elmdale, Michigan. There he lived until his death in 1924; his family still live there.

In the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in October, 1904, a resolution was passed granting the ordination of a minister in the White Cloud congregation.<sup>7</sup> The next year, 1905, John C. Springer was ordained. He had moved to White Cloud from Illinois in 1903. He owned and operated the grocery store at Big Prairie Center. Two years after his ordination, he was forced to leave because of failing health. He went to California and New Mexico, but getting no relief there, he returned north in the summer of 1910 and located east of Goshen, Indiana, where he died that same fall.<sup>8</sup>

After Springer left, it was again necessary to ordain a minister. The conference that met in October, 1909, granted permission<sup>9</sup> and in December, 1909, T. U. Nelson was ordained. He was chosen by lot and in his own notebook we find this account of it.

"Dec. 4, 1909, votes were taken for minister and the following brethren were named: John F. Miller, Daniel Horst, Samuel Madlem, Aaron Hartman, T. U. Nelson, and David Yoder. The latter was excused from the lot on account of his age, at his request. Lot was drawn on December 5, 1909, and the duty fell on your humble servant, who had drawn the first book."<sup>10</sup>

He had felt a definite call to this work as J. M. Kreider from Elkhart, Indiana, was preaching on the calling of a minister at the nomination service.

He was born in Lagrange County, Indiana, on June 14, 1870, and had been among the first to move to this region. His occupation was teaching and at the time of his ordination he was employed as teacher of the Pleasant Valley School. He supplemented his teaching income with farming in order to provide for his growing family of nine children, until in 1914 he took a position as postal clerk in the Newaygo, Michigan, post office, where he worked until his retirement in 1940.

It was shortly after his ordination that the Union Church burned. Many in the congregation were in favor of building a church of their own, but the officials decided that it was best not to do so. Perhaps they feared too much disagreement over the location, the members being quite scattered. Instead, the Mennonites helped rebuild the Union Church, donating both work and money. The understanding was that they were to use the building as their own, giving way only for funerals. While the building was being constructed, services were held in the Congregational Church at Big Prairie Center, several miles to the east.

We have seen the rapid increase in the membership from thirty-five to nearly ninety in about seven years, being at its height in 1907. From that time on, it slowly decreased until the lowest point was reached in 1925 with a membership of twenty-five. One reason for this decline was the fact that the land was not so productive as had been anticipated, some farms barely yielding even a scanty living. Another reason for the decline was the loss of young people. At first many of them went to Illinois, Indiana, or Kent County, Michigan, where the boys found farm work and the girls housework. In later years some of the girls went to Midland, Michigan, where Mennonite houseworkers were in demand. Some married and made their homes at these various places. Some of the young people went to near-by cities such as Grand Rapids and Muskegon to find employment in factories, and were often lost to the church. Because the congregation was so small and so isolated from other Mennonite communities, as well as having many related families, it was difficult for its youth to find marriage companions within the church. Consequently, many married outside the church and often were lost to the group, although in some cases the non-Mennonite partner



was brought into the church. In recent years, the employment situation has been somewhat better. Many members work at the Gerber Canning Factory in Fremont, which is within driving distance, and thus these workers can stay at home and remain a part of the church community.

Up to 1918 this congregation was independent, but at the conference held in June, 1918, it was decided that the White Cloud congregation be placed under the district mission board.<sup>11</sup> This was carried out and the church remained under the care of the board up until 1947 when the conference granted it the privilege to become an independent congregation again.<sup>12</sup> One requirement was that they have a visiting brother to serve until such time as it would be suitable to ordain a deacon. Ray Bontrager served in this capacity until 1952.

The bishops during the early years were J. P. Miller, and David A. Yoder. During its period under the mission board, it was served by Jacob K. Bixler, D. D. Troyer, Oscar S. Hostetler, Edwin J. Yoder and T. E. Schrock.<sup>13</sup> The first bishop from Michigan to be in charge of the church was T. E. Schrock, from Clarksville, 1944 to 1947. He was followed by the present bishop C. C. Culp from Brethren, Michigan.

The office of deacon was filled by Eli Zook from 1900 to 1910 when he moved away. Harvey Sarver was ordained, by lot, May 24, 1910, by Bishop J. P. Miller. He served in that capacity for several years, then he, too, moved away. Succeeding him was Harvey A. Miller, who was chosen by lot and ordained in 1913, serving until his death in 1924. Then for a long period of years there was no deacon.<sup>14</sup>

During the history of the Sunday school, quite a few have served as superintendent. Besides Dester and Zook in the early days, were Harvey Miller, Daniel Horst, Aaron Smeltzer, J. J. Eash, Fred Stichter, and T. U. Nelson. Following these were Edward D. Jones, Dwayne Nelson, Daniel J. Schmucker, C. L. Brimmer (1939-45), Ray Bontrager (1946-47), Nelson Waybill (1948-50), and John Arnold (1951-52).<sup>15</sup>

In 1938 a library was started which now contains 127 books and pamphlets.

In the summers of 1928 and 1929 a Sunday school was conducted in the school at Diamond Lake. There were two Mennonite families at that place who were not able to attend at Big Prairie and other families who attended no church. Daniel Horst was the superintendent and conducted Sunday school each Sunday afternoon. Every two weeks there were preaching services conducted by either T. U. Nelson, the pastor, or a visiting minister.<sup>16</sup> More recently extension work has been undertaken for a number of years, 1941 and 1942, at the Free Methodist Church building near Davis Bridge. Services were also held at Stoner's Home for the Aged during the same years.<sup>17</sup>

It is not known when Sunday evening meetings were first held or when they took the form of young people's meetings, but it appears that there were evening meetings almost from the beginning. The committee report recommending the change of meeting place to Big Prairie Church in 1903, also recommended appointment of a standing committee to look after the house and, among other duties, they were to see that lamps were arranged. For a few years around 1925, young people's meetings were held only in the summer months. However, they were revived and carried on despite the small number of young people.

It was about this time that the place of church services was again changed, this time from the Union Church to the Congregational building at Big Prairie Center. There were several reasons for the change. There was no longer anyone living near enough to do the janitor work conveniently. The roads in to the Union Church were bad and the other building was now more centrally located. Some of the members had agitated for the move because they disapproved of the United States flag being displayed in the Union Church. At first the Congregational Church was used only in winter, then several years later, in 1928, a complete change was made. The church was smaller, suiting the needs of the diminishing congregation, and was more easily heated in winter. The Mennonites rented this building until 1937, when the owners again started using it. Once again the Mennonites moved, back to the Union Church on Big Prairie Desert. At that time they felt they were too small and too poor a congregation to think of building for themselves, and it would have been difficult to choose a location agreeable to all of them.

In 1932, the church, so far as numbers were concerned, was back where it had been in 1900, with a membership of thirty-five. Then began a gradual increase. In 1933, Joseph Neuhauser, from Leo, Indiana, held evangelistic meetings at which time there were sixteen converts, fifteen of whom were baptized. Several later dropped out but it still left a sizable increase.

In 1932, the Bowne, Zion, and White Cloud congregations had a joint meeting and program at the Zion church on Thanksgiving Day. This was so well received that it was decided to continue, holding meetings on Good Friday, July 4th and Thanksgiving Day annually, rotating the place of meeting. After one July 4th meeting at White Cloud, it was decided to omit this date, but meetings have been held regularly on Good Friday and Thanksgiving Day. In 1947 these three churches were joined by the congregation at Chief. This has been a move toward lessening the isolation from other Mennonite communities.

About this time was felt the great need for more workers at this place. From 1911, T. U. Nelson, as minister, had had

the responsibility of the church, after 1924 with the aid of a deacon. It was difficult even to recruit enough Sunday-school teachers. As a consequence, the minister, in spite of ill health, had to serve in several roles: filling the pulpit each Sunday, serving as superintendent of the Sunday school, teaching a class and overseeing young people's meetings. All this, along with a full-time job necessary to earn a living, left too little time for much pastoral work which should have been done. At his request for help in 1931, Eli A. Bontrager from Midland was asked to assist with the work here and for about two years he frequently filled the pulpit.<sup>18</sup> The mission board finally sent help in 1935, when Edward D. Jones, from Middlebury, Indiana, was appointed to be ordained and sent to the White Cloud church as pastor. From this time, T. U. Nelson was relieved of the main responsibility of the congregation, but he continued to preach on alternate Sundays until 1949, rounding out 40 years of service in the ministry. His interest in the local church remained active even when he could no longer participate. For several years he became nearly blind from cataracts in both eyes, reading only with difficulty by use of a strong reading glass. During this time he often memorized portions of Scripture to use for the opening devotions. A successful operation in 1946 restored the use of one eye, so he was again able to read. During the last year of his life he was often kept from services by illness and he died from cancer on July 22, 1950.

Edward D. Jones, present pastor, was born April 23, 1906, at Mylo, North Dakota; his family later moved to Indiana. He came from an Amish family but he joined the Forks Mennonite Church at Middlebury, Indiana, in 1928. He was appointed by the mission board to come to White Cloud and was ordained to the ministry on Easter Sunday, 1935, at the Middlebury church where he was then a member. He came to this community on May 19, 1935, and made his home with the T. U. Nelson family during the summer. In August he was married to Cleo Nussbaum of Middlebury and they made their home on a farm several miles south of Big Prairie Center. He is a carpenter by occupation and has made his living in that way. He has a family of six children. In 1946 he moved nearer White Cloud where he bought a piece of land and built a house. During the winters of 1938, '39, and '40 he attended the six-week Winter Bible School at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, to better prepare himself for the work to which he had been called. He began with a heavy assignment, serving as Sunday school superintendent, having charge of the young people's meetings and preaching on alternate Sundays, along with the responsibility for the work of the church as a whole.

In earlier years there were few activities outside of the Sunday meetings be-



cause of the scattered condition of the congregation, and so it was not until 1936 that a women's sewing circle was organized. It is thought that Mrs. Edward D. Jones was the first president, although there are no records available until the year 1938. The officers for 1938 and 1939 were President, Sadie (Mrs. George) Dunham; Vice-president, Cleo (Mrs. Edward D.) Jones; and Secretary-Treasurer, Dorcas Horst (Mrs. George Haight). In 1940 the following were elected: President, Elizabeth Schmucker; Vice-president, Mattie (Mrs. Harvey J.) Schmucker; and Secretary - Treasurer, Goldie (Mrs. Daniel J.) Schmucker. The latter two have served continuously to the present time. Artie (Mrs. Ray) Bontrager replaced Elizabeth Schmucker (Mrs. Walter) Polachek as president in 1948 and she was followed by Rachel (Mrs. John) Arnold in 1952.

During the first few years, sewing was done for needy families in the church and community. In 1941, the first box of garments and comforters was sent to the Mennonite Central Committee at Akron, Pennsylvania, for foreign relief. Since that time, 1,225 pounds of bedding and clothing have been given for this cause. Besides these, many garments and comforters were given to local families who were needy or had lost their homes by fire, many of whom were not Mennonites.

Each of the four young men from this congregation who served in Civilian Public Service during World War II were given camp kits prepared by the circle. The first group canning project was undertaken in 1951 for the Michigan Mennonite Bible School at Fairview.

There is no separate organization for the juniors, but during the summer months when there are a number of the young girls present, some activity is provided for them, such as hemming dish towels, making toys or scrapbooks, and tying comforters. The group meets monthly in the various homes, filling a social need of the women as well as providing opportunity for service.

The first summer Bible school was held in the summer of 1944 with Ray Bontrager as superintendent. He and his wife had moved from Midland, Michigan, to White Cloud, feeling the call to serve in some smaller church where workers were needed. He has served as superintendent of the summer Bible school each year since its beginning and has given valuable assistance with the music of the church. The enrollment of the summer Bible school has increased from 29 in 1944 to 79 in 1951 and has resulted in some increase in attendance at regular services by the people of the community.

Increasingly, the need for a church building of their own was felt by the members, and for some years they had been building up a fund for that purpose. In December, 1947, it was decided to proceed with building plans. Walter Polachek, Ray Bontrager, and George Dunham were appointed to serve as a

building committee, with Edward D. Jones as counselor. The site was donated by Edward D. Jones next to his home ½ mile south and ½ mile east of White Cloud, on the corner of 8th and Walnut Avenue. A wooded tract of five acres was given to the church by Mrs. George Dunham, from which some of the lumber was obtained. Many other contributions of materials and money were made by members as well as outside groups. All of the labor was contributed, most of it by the local members. On several occasions a few carloads of men from the Bowne church and a group from the Midland church came to offer their services for the day. There were no official ground-breaking ceremonies but the first shovelful of dirt was removed by T. U. Nelson so that at least symbolically he was able to help start this work to which he had long looked forward, but which he did not live to see entirely completed.

The building was first used in August, 1949, when William Hiller of Crumstown, Indiana, held evangelistic meetings here. The work was far from completed at that time but regular services were conducted there from that time on, and the construction was continued as it was possible. The first funeral held in the building was that of Mrs. M. D. Schmucker, December 18, 1951.

The building as completed measures 30 by 52 feet, with a basement 30 by 40 feet and a balcony 30 by 12 feet. It has a seating capacity of 100 in the main auditorium and with the use of chairs and the balcony can accommodate 175. Dedication services were held May 18, 1952, with an appropriate program and dedication sermon by Bishop C. C. Culp.

On December 27 to 29, 1949, the White Cloud congregation was host to the ninth annual Michigan Mennonite Ministers' Meeting.

The congregation at present numbers eighty. It is composed of families who are descendants of the early settlers; names such as Miller, Sarver, Nelson, Schmucker, Kuhns, and Grabill. Then there are those who more recently moved into the community, such as Jones, Burkholder and Bontrager. A third group of names not traditionally Mennonite have been added by conversion or confession, in many cases husbands of women who were already members, such as Dunham, Waybill, Haight, Arnold, Fredenberg, Polachek, Hoyt and Wildfong.

On March 2, 1952, the congregation voted almost unanimously to ordain a deacon, leaving it up to the examining committee to handle as they would see fit. On March 9, 1952, the vote of the congregation was taken by Bishops C. C. Culp and T. E. Schrock.<sup>19</sup> As a result, two names, Ray Bontrager and Lowell Burkholder, were presented for the lot which was drawn on May 18, 1952. Lowell Burkholder was called to serve the church in this office and was ordained the same day by Bishop C. C. Culp. He and his wife had come from Elkhart, In-

diana, moved to White Cloud in 1944 but in 1947 they left to live at Ashley, Michigan, until the fall of 1950 when they returned to White Cloud. They have a family of ten children.

On May 3, 1952, the White Cloud church voted to join the Michigan Mennonite Conference which was in the process of being organized.

The building of the new church has been a venture in co-operation and faith. This experience surely has strengthened each member who has sacrificed to give materials and labor and has bound them together into a more powerful organ in witnessing to the Gospel in their community. The gradual growth in the last twenty years has been noted and there is every reason to believe, with the growing group of young people and the increased activity of the older ones, that this congregation should continue to grow and make a real contribution to its community and Christendom as a whole.

1 Information on early settlers from T. U. Nelson and Daniel Horst in 1936, also older members of the church and sons and daughters of these settlers in 1952.

2 Personal interview with T. U. Nelson and typewritten manuscript on *The Amish in Newaygo County, Michigan*, thought to be the work of T. U. Nelson.

3 Interview with T. U. Nelson.

4 Interview with T. U. Nelson, and letter from J. P. Miller to T. U. Nelson, sent from Clarksville, Michigan, August 20, 1912.

5 Report of this committee now in possession of Edward D. Jones.

6 Interview with T. U. Nelson.

7 Minutes of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1864-1929, p. 87.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

10 Quotations from notebook of T. U. Nelson.

11 Minutes of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1864-1929, p. 240.

12 Minutes of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1947.

13 Minutes of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1864-1929, p. 335. Later information from Edward D. Jones.

14 Information from T. U. Nelson.

15 Information from Daniel Horst in 1936, and from members of the congregation in 1952.

16 Information from Daniel Horst.

17 Information from Edward D. Jones.

18 Ray Bontrager, present member at White Cloud, recalls this as he often drove for his father on these occasions.

19 Notes on these meetings are in possession of Edward D. Jones.

## AMISH TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Who was the first member of the Amish Church in America to teach in the public schools? S. D. Guengerich, Wellman, Iowa, who later became widely known in Amish circles as an editor, printer, and publisher, received a teacher's certificate to teach in Johnson County, Iowa, on November 10, 1860. It is not known if he used this certificate, which is now deposited in the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. Several other certificates in his name are on file in the Archives. Guengerich taught in the public schools of Pennsylvania and Iowa. (See his biography in the October, 1950, *MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN*.)



## A History of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference

SIMON GINGERICH

The Iowa-Nebraska Conference came into being in 1921 as one of the conferences which were formed when the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference merged with the Mennonite conferences in the states west of Indiana.<sup>1</sup> One of the chief factors which worked to bring about this merger was the need for co-operation among Mennonite groups during and immediately following World War I.<sup>2</sup> Other contributing factors were the unifying effect of a wide circulation of the *Gospel Herald* and the rather free use of the services of certain influential persons such as Daniel Kauffman by both groups. An illustration of this latter factor is the fact that in 1919 Daniel Kauffman, a member of a Mennonite conference, preached the conference sermon for the Western District A.M. Conference and that year served on the resolutions committee of the Western District A.M. Conference as well as on the resolutions committee of the Missouri-Iowa Mennonite Conference. Still other factors which led to the merger were the co-operation of the conferences in several mission and welfare projects (Manitou, Colorado, Church and Kansas City Children's Home), their mutual support of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities and their frequent collaboration in Sunday-school conferences. As a result of the above factors and possibly others a "we feeling" and pronounced sentiment developed in favor of merging and reorganizing the conference lines. This sentiment in the Western District A.M. Conference was crystallized at the annual conference session held at Garden City, Missouri, Oct. 15, 16, 1919.

By the fall of 1919 each of the three conferences, Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite, Missouri-Iowa Mennonite, and Western District A.M., as well as the other Mennonite conferences involved in the merger, had passed resolutions in favor of the merger; and each had provided for a committee to confer with the committees of the other conferences. These committees met at the East Fairview Church near Milford, Nebraska, May 26 and 27, 1920. It seems that the Amish Mennonites of Nebraska were not particularly eager for the merger of their body with more progressive Mennonites. They agreed to the merger on the condition that they be allowed to form a conference with the Amish Mennonites of Iowa. At that time Iowa and Nebraska each had only one small Mennonite congregation, South English, Iowa, and Roseland, Nebraska. (The new conference included another Mennonite congregation at Alpha, Minnesota). The result of the meeting at the East Fairview Church, as far as this paper is concerned, was the arrangement for the Iowa-Nebraska union and the appointment of an executive

committee to begin the organization of the new conference. The regular conferences in the fall of 1920 placed their stamps of approval on the arrangements of the merger committees.

The executive committee, which was appointed for the Iowa-Nebraska Conference at the East Fairview meeting, consisted of S. C. Yoder, D. G. Lapp, Perry Blosser, Simon Gingerich and J. E. Zimmerman.<sup>3</sup> This committee met March 4, 1921, at the home of the chairman, S. C. Yoder, near Kalona, Iowa, to plan for the first meeting of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference. The following decisions were made at this committee meeting and were recorded by Simon Gingerich, the secretary of the committee. Church and Sunday School conference shall be held September 14-16, at the Lower Deer Creek Church near Kalona, Iowa. Ministers shall meet at six o'clock the evening of September 13. S. C. Yoder shall preach the conference sermon. The following subjects shall be discussed at the conference: Shall this conference adopt a constitution and discipline? What are the benefits and duties of a district mission board? Other questions to be discussed at the conference should be presented at the preliminary ministers' meeting for approval. D. G. Lapp was appointed to be a delegate from this conference to the Dakota-Montana Conference. The committee also prepared a program for the Sunday School Conference.

On the evening of September 13, 1921, the ministerial body met at the Lower Deer Creek Church to complete the organization for the first meeting of the conference. The election of officers resulted in the following: moderator, S. C. Yoder; assistant moderator, D. G. Lapp; secretary, Simon Gingerich; assistant secretary, Allen Good.

The first official meeting of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference was called to order by S. C. Yoder, September 14, 1921. At the first session J. S. Shoemaker preached the conference sermon using as his text Ephesians 2:14, 18-19, 21-22. "All the bishops present and some representative ministers . . . gave their hearty testimony to the sermon, adding many helpful and practical thoughts."<sup>4</sup> The following questions were discussed at this meeting: (1) Shall this conference adopt a constitution and discipline? The answer was, yes; and a committee was appointed to draw up the document. (2) What does the conference suggest to help our ministers become more efficient in their work? (3) What are the benefits and duties of a district mission board? (4) How can we promote a deeper sense of spiritual responsibility in our homes and congregations? (5) How shall congregations without a resident bishop be supplied? In answer to this latter question the bishops met together separately and decided that Peter Kennel should have the responsibility for supplying the Nebraska and Colorado churches while Simon Gingerich should care for the

South English, Iowa, and Alpha, Minnesota, congregations. Other business transacted at the meeting consisted of the appointment of committees, election of officers for the next year, the hearing of committee reports and the passing of several motions and resolutions. Among the motions was one giving the conference the official name of "Iowa-Nebraska Conference." Another motion called upon the secretary to have the conference proceedings printed and distributed to the congregations. It was decided that the evening sessions of each day of the meeting should be given to an inspirational address and a sermon. At the 1921 meeting Noah Mack and George R. Brunk preached the evening sermons.

I have given the account of the first meeting of the conference somewhat in detail because it largely set the pattern for the annual meetings. There has been little modification of the procedures of the conference except that as the work of the conference increased more committees were appointed and more reports were read and accepted at the meetings.

During the year following the first meeting of the conference a committee composed of S. C. Yoder, J. E. Zimmerman, Perry Blosser, C. J. Garber, and Simon Gingerich prepared the first Constitution and Discipline for the Conference. This document was adopted by the ministerial body at the 1922 conference. The secretary was instructed to have the Constitution and Discipline printed and distributed for presentation to and approval of the congregations of the district. The Constitution and Discipline has been amended several times and has had two general revisions, one in 1933 and another in 1948. An amendment in 1949 changed the date of the regular annual meeting from September to the second Wednesday in August.

One will notice in the preamble to the Constitution that the purpose of the conference is the "promoting of the cause of Christ and the unifying and strengthening of the church. . . ." In order to accomplish the expressed purposes the body functions in three ways: (1) It provides a meeting once each year where ministers and lay people meet together and share with each other information and inspiration. The conference sermon has often contributed to this function. Committee reports inform individuals and the conference body of any significant progress or needs in their areas of service. The evening sessions of Church Conference and the Workers' Conference are valuable for their inspirational function. (2) The conference also provides a place for ministers to confer with each other individually and as a body about their common concerns. The free discussion of a wide range of problems with a view to arriving at a Scriptural and/or practical solution is, no doubt, one of the major functions of the conference. (3) While a majority of the conference decisions and resolutions are of an advisory



character, there is also the concept that the ministerial body may legislate certain rules which then become binding. This concept was expressed quite clearly by A. G. Yoder at the second meeting of the conference (1922) when he answered the question, "What shall be the authority of conference decisions and regulations?" by "... Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth . . ." (Matthew 16:19).

The membership of the Iowa-Nebraska conference is limited to the ordained men serving those congregations which are recognized by the conference as being under its jurisdiction. Lay people attend the conference meetings and sometimes serve on committees and boards. Yet, it is the ministerial body that votes on issues to be decided by the conference. An effort has been made to chart the organization of the conference. Certain aspects of the structure of the organization are rather obscure since the constitution makes no provision for certain committees that now function. Also, one might question the function of the Ministerial Body Committee when for all practical purposes the membership of that committee coincides with the membership of the conference. At the 1949 meeting of the conference a committee was appointed to study the conference organization. It is supposed that this committee will clarify the responsibilities of various officials, committees, and boards; and perhaps suggest possible modifications of the present organizational setup.

Through the years the conference has concerned itself with a great variety of subjects, problems, and questions. An attempt has been made to study and classify the topics which have been formally discussed at the meetings of the conference. In the appendix to this paper will be found my classification of the subjects. This classification was made on the basis of the subject titles and the very brief reviews of the addresses which the secretaries of the conference have included in their annual reports of the conference proceedings. I have taken the liberty to shorten and simplify many of the subject titles as I listed them in the appendix. (Deposited in the Goshen College Historical Library.)

As one would expect during the first five years problems of church organization, government, and procedure had a large place in the proceedings of the conference. During those early years the conference defined its position on many questions of doctrine, practice, and Christian ethics. The work of the conference in the area of church government has been largely regulative rather than active promotional organization.

It is interesting to notice that nearly all the major points of Christian doctrine have been expounded at conference sessions at some time or another during the twenty-nine years of conference history. There have been addresses on the doctrines: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the

Scriptures, regeneration, eschatology, eternal bliss and punishment, Christian assurance and the Church. It seems that anthropology is about the only area of theology that has not been discussed. The Conference has always been deeply concerned to maintain and to define the applications of the doctrine of nonconformity to the world. It is to the credit of the ministers of this conference that on the doctrine of separation from the world there has been a most devoted and noble effort to save the church from disintegration through worldliness. The doctrine of nonresistance has not been expounded at the conference meetings to the extent that it possibly deserves. Without doubt it has been the feeling of those preparing conference programs that the church is relatively secure on nonresistance and perhaps rather insecure on nonconformity. More attention was given to the point where greater need was felt. The large number of men taking military service during World War II may indicate a need for some rethinking on the security of the doctrine of nonresistance.

Many of the talks given at the conference have been inspirational addresses and sermons. Other speeches treated points of personal ethics such as the use of tobacco and business ethics such as the acceptance of government relief, life insurance, and the bankruptcy law. A talk in 1936 commended the soil conservation program of the government. One comes to feel while studying the proceedings of the conference that the church has the concept that it has an obligation to speak out on questions in all areas of Christian living.

The problems of young people had seemingly not been a great concern of the conference before about 1944. There were two addresses on youth, one in 1922 by S. C. Yoder and another in 1937 by Nelson Kauffman. Yet before 1944 the conference had not initiated anything particularly for youth. (About 1932 the ministers of Southeastern Iowa initiated a 3 or 4 day Young People's Institute which has been held regularly in August each year at the East Union Church near Kalona, Iowa. At the Lower Deer Creek Church near Kalona, there has been at times during the last decade a two-week Winter Bible School operated jointly by the Conservative A.M. congregation and the Mennonite churches in the immediate area). On February 4, 1944, at a meeting of the ministers of Southeastern Iowa, "The question was raised in regard to the dangers our young people are exposed to in the modern high school."<sup>5</sup> Three days later the same ministerial body met a committee of the Board of Education composed of E. E. Miller, Milo Kauffman, and H. R. Schertz which urged that a Mennonite high school be built in the Wellman-Kalona community. A committee composed of John Y. Swartzendruber, Harold Brenneman, and Amos Gingerich was appointed to make the initial investigation relative to the

possibility of a new school. By the time the conference met in September, 1944, the committee was ready to recommend that the school should be built and that the district conference should assume control of the new institution. (The committee was not eager to have the school under the direction of the Mennonite Board of Education.) The conference accepted the report and appointed several additional men to serve on the Southeastern Iowa School Committee. By the time the conference met in September, 1945, the school was in operation. It now has a good, new building, state accreditation, and a satisfactory staff of instructors.

At each meeting of the conference certain formal actions are taken by the conference in the form of resolutions. Each time there has been a death in the ministerial body the conference has passed a resolution of sympathy to the family and congregation of the deceased. Also, it is the courteous policy of the conference to extend a resolution of thanks to the congregation which has served as host to the meeting. A classified list of the significant actions of the conference will be found in the appendix. This list will serve as an index to the conference reports from 1921 to 1949. (Deposited in the Goshen College Historical Library.)

During the twenty-nine years of its history the conference has grown from<sup>6</sup> seventeen congregations with 2647 members to<sup>7</sup> twenty congregations with 4032 members. In 1949 there were four mission Sunday schools and one regularly functioning mission station. There were in 1949 a total of 123 pupils from non-Mennonite homes enrolled in the Sunday schools of the district.

The churches of the conference district have always gladly and willingly supported missionary and relief enterprises. A number of outstanding foreign missionaries and mission board administrators have come from the Iowa and Nebraska churches. Among this group are Mahlon and George Lapp, J. D. Graber, and S. C. Yoder. Present foreign missionaries from the district are Eugene and Luella Blosser, Lena Graber, and Mrs. Wilbur Hostetler.

The last five years have brought the beginning of a new awakening of activity in the conference district. Four mission Sunday schools have been started during this period. Two foreign missionaries have gone out to China as the first newly appointed missionaries for some years. Certain of the needs of the youth are being met through the work of the Iowa Mennonite School. The district mission board is more active. It now publishes a quarterly news bulletin. A number of young men have been ordained to the ministry in the district. Increasing numbers of youth are attending colleges. It seems that there may be a beginning of a change of emphasis in the conference district from that of conservation to an em-



phasis on promotion and evangelism. "Whosoever saveth his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, the same shall find it."

Wakarusa, Ind.

1 Melvin Gingerich, *The Mennonites in Iowa*, (Iowa City, 1939, p. 304).

2 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

3 Harry F. Weber, *Centennial History of the Mennonites of Illinois* (Goshen, 1931), p. 328.

4 *Iowa-Nebraska Conference Report*, 1921, p. 3.

5 *Iowa-Nebraska Conference Report*, 1944.

6 *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1922, p. 58.

7 *Iowa-Nebraska Conference Report*, 1949.

## A Western Trip

Elkhart, Ind., Nov. 12, 1891

C. Z. Yoder

Weilersville, Ohio

My dear Brother:

Having had the closing up of the Herald to look after all alone I did not find time to write again before this. I will now give you an outline of the trip mapped out for Bro. Isaac Miller. I would say right here, however, that it is almost impossible for us to give him the name of *every* place where he may see work to do, and perhaps some of the places given may not be in shape to be helped much by a visit. In this, however, Bro. Miller will have to depend upon judgment and divine guidance. He may find, upon enquiring at the places where he stops, that there are other places not herein mentioned, where a field is open for work. The places, however, where we think it is very necessary to go to I will underscore.

He may also be able to make better railway connections sometimes by taking other roads than those mentioned; in this he can inform himself by applying for time tables of the different railroads as he goes along.

From Orrville, Ohio, to Kokomo, Ind., per Pittsburgh & Fort Wayne R.R. to Delphos; then per Toledo, Kansas City & St. Louis Ry to Kokomo. Write to Pre. D. C. Miller, Pleona, Howard Co., Ind., to meet you at Kokomo.

From Kokomo per same R.R. to Oakland, Ill., then per Terre Haute & Peoria R.R. to Arcola, Douglass Co., Ill. Write to M. J. Yoder at Arcola. They need to be visited, as their number is small and they have no minister. I think all the members live west 3 or 4 miles from Arcola.

There is another Amish Church at Arthur, Moultrie Co., Ill., (Pre. Moses J. Yoder) but I hardly think they would work with us.

From Arcola go South to Neoga, then per Toledo, Kansas City & St. Louis R.R. to St. Louis, then per St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern R.R. to Williamsville, then over to Willow Springs, then per Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis R.R. to West Plains. Write to Noah D. Troyer, Oak Mound,

Ozark Co., Mo. Oak Mound is pretty far west from West Plains. I have written to Bro. Troyer for information, concerning distance, and also name of his nearest station, as I am not sure whether West Plains is the nearest one. There are only a few families here and no minister, and complain that they have been slighted. There is also a C. K. Miller at Bakersville, Ozark Co., Mo., but I do not know where he lives from Bro. Troyer.

From this place go to Hickory Co., Mo. Go per Kans. C., Ft. Scott & Mem. R.R. to Ash Grove; then per Clinton and Springfield R.R. to Vista. Write to D. J. Miller, Quincy, Hickory Co., Mo.

From here go per same road to Garden City, Cass Co., Mo. Write to Pre. Peter Zimmerman at Garden City. There is quite a large Amish Church here and he can stop, as it is on his way. There is also an old Mennonite Church here. (Pre. L. J. Heatwole, Garden City, Cass Co., Mo.)

From here go by same road or Kans. C., Ft. Scott & Mem. to Olathe, Johnson Co., Kansas. A few members of the Old Menn. Church live here. Write to Samuel Ernst, Olathe, Johnson Co., Kans.

From Olathe go per Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe R.R. to Emporia, then per Mo., Kans. & Texas R.R. to Hartford, Lyon Co., Kansas. Write to Pre. J. J. Bontreger, at Hartford (when I say "at" I mean that that is their post office).

From there per same road to Columbus, Cherokee Co., Kansas. Write to Pre. S. A. Mishler at Columbus. Both of these last named churches are small.

From there go per Mo. and Pacific R.R. to Arkansas City, Cowley Co., Kans. Write to Abram Means at Arkansas City. Only a few members of the Old Mennonite Church here. They are not often visited.

Then via Winfield, per Atchison, Top. & Santa Fe R.R. to Harper, Harper Co., Kansas. Write to J. G. Wenger at Harper. This is a newly organized old Mennonite Church.

From there go per Hutchinson & Southern R.R. & Atch., Top. & S. Fe R.R. to Partridge, Reno Co., Kansas. Write to Pre. D. D. Schlabach at Partridge. (Small Amish church here).

From Harvey, Marion and McPherson counties can be taken in if Bro. Miller wishes. There are a number of churches of O.M. and A.M. branches and he can find out perhaps better than I can inform by asking. From Partridge he might go to Newton, Harvey County, first. He might write to R. J. Heatwole who lives at Newton. Bro. Heatwole could give him all the necessary information when Bro. Miller gets to Newton.

Then from McPherson, per Atch. Top. & Santa Fe R.R. to Larned, Pawnee Co., Kansas. Write to D. H. King. This little flock needs help and encouragement.

From here back to Great Bend, then over to Hoisington; then via Missouri Pacific R.R. to Ransom, Ness Co., Kan-

sas. Write to E. M. Shellenberger. Only a few members here of the O.M. Church.

From here return per Mo. Pac. R.R. to Dacey, north on St. Louis & San. Francisco R.R. to Ellsworth, then west on Union Pacific R.R. to Oakley, then north to Colby on same road (branch), then northeast to Selden, Sheridan Co., Kansas. Write to Jonathan L. Stoltzfus at Selden. A number of members in this vicinity, but most of the members get their mail at Shibboleth, Decatur Co., among them Christian E. Stoltzfus and Jos. D. Birkey. There are some 12 or 15 families here. I think they are nearly all Amish.

From there (Selden or Dresden) east to Republican City, then northwest on Mo. Pacific to Arapahoe, Furnas Co., Nebraska. Write to Christian Hieser. There are only a few families here. Bro. Miller might ask here about Bertrand, Phelps Co., as there are a few families there, among them Jacob and Abner Yoder, but I do not know their nearest station.

From Arapahoe back to Oxford Junction or to Holdrege per Union Pacific R.R. to Roseland, Adams Co., Nebr. Write to Pre. Albrecht Schiffer at Roseland. There is quite a congregation here.

From there north to Hastings, then west on Burlington & Mo. (Union Pacific) R.R. to Kearney and on west to Lexington, Dawson Co. Write to J. Z. Lantz at Lexington. I think he is the only one there. Then on west to Chappell, Deuel Co., Nebr. Write to Pre. N. C. Roth at Chappell. There is a small Amish congregation here and I would advise a good visit and a number of meetings with these brethren.

From Chappell back to Kearney, then either via Hastings or Grand Island to Aurora, Hamilton Co., Nebr., as this is on the way home. Write to Pre. Andrew Oesch.

From here, if he wants to, Bro. Miller might visit our Prussian Mennonite Brethren at Henderson, York Co., Nebr. Bro. Oesch would probably accompany him over as it is not many miles. Bro. Isaac Peters is bishop in that church.

From here he might go on by way of York and Seward, to the large Amish church at Milford, Seward Co., Nebr., and write to Bro. J. M. T. Miller who lives in Milford.

From here by way of Lincoln to Plattsmouth per Burlington & Mo. River R.R., then east on C. B. & Q. R.R. to Clarinda, Page Co., Iowa, by way of Clarinda Junction. Write to S. M. Eberly at Clarinda. Only a few O.M. members here.

From here back to Clarinda Junct. and east per C. B. & Q. R.R. to Fairfield, Jefferson Co., Iowa, then northeast per Chicago & Rock Island R.R. to Brighton, then east to Wayland, Henry Co., Iowa. Write to Pre. Stephen T. Miller at Wayland. There is quite a large A.M. church here. There is also a large church farther north in Washington Co. and Johnson Co.,



but it is well supplied with able ministers and besides it requires considerable round-about travel to reach it. Still if Bro. Stephen T. Miller thinks it advisable, Bro. Miller might visit Bro. Wery's church in Washington & Johnson Counties.

From here go east to Chicago, from Washington, Iowa, per Chicago & R.I. R.R. At Tiskilwa, Bureau Co., there is an Amish church in charge of Bro. Joseph Buercky. Then on to Chicago and from there per Lake Shore & Michigan Southern R.R. (out of the same depot) to Elkhart, Ind., and then home. He might stay here a few days and hold some meetings in our O.M. and A.M. churches in this county.

In addition I might say that some of the remote churches and scattered members are rather backward about appointing meetings. Bro. Miller must just make himself at home with them and go to work. It will require good courage and endurance, for it is not an easy matter to go into this kind of work. Our most successful evangelists make visits from house to house and thus come into personal contact with people and thereby become acquainted with their spiritual wants and needs, and thus they can give the best help and do much good.

Our work as a church seems to be growing year by year, and we need far more men in the evangelizing work than we now have to supply the need. May God awaken many willing and able men around us to work in this capacity.

Bro. Miller may get some money on the way, especially in the larger churches, but I think he should not leave with less than \$75.00 from the Evangelizing Fund. In his work he might also encourage people to subscribe for the Herald, and get them to send church news for publication so that we may know where our people are and how they are getting on temporally and spiritually.

As you asked me to let you know what the duties of the Evangelizing Committee are I will say, in a few words, that our duty is to see where help is needed among our small churches and scattered members of both Amish and Old Mennonite branches of the church and then find ministers who are fitted for evangelizing work to go and preach to them and, if possible, gather in more members for the body of Christ by teaching our principles of faith and practice, that churches may be built up in the most holy faith and the cause of Christ be prospered.

As my letter is getting very long I will close. Any further information will be cheerfully given so far as I can. Hoping to hear from you soon I am

Your brother in faith,  
A. B. Kolb

If this trip is too long for Bro. Miller please let me know, we might then try to lessen it if possible, but if he can he should make the whole trip.

## Book Review

*Separated unto God*, by John C. Wenger.  
Mennonite Publishing House, 1951.  
350 pp. \$3.50.

*Separated unto God* is subtitled "A Plea for Christian Simplicity of Life and for a Scriptural Nonconformity to the World." John C. Wenger was commissioned to write this book by the General Problems Committee of Mennonite General Conference and by the Publishing Committee of Mennonite Publication Board.

The author needs no introduction either to the readers of these columns or to the readers of Anabaptist-Mennonite literature in general. Consistent with his plea for simplicity which is the burden of this book, Brother Wenger gives none of his academic accomplishments on the title page. He is professor of theology and philosophy at Goshen College Biblical Seminary and is an active student and productive writer of Anabaptist-Mennonite historical and theological literature.

*Separated unto God* is a first attempt to include within the compass of one book every area of application of the Biblical emphasis on nonconformity to the world as understood by the Mennonites. Both in its nature and size it is a companion volume to Guy F. Hersberger's *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*. As such these two volumes are the first definitive works on two of our primary and most distinctive doctrines. It is significant that these should appear at a time when it is so apparent that Nonresistance and Nonconformity are two of the major blind spots in Christendom. These two areas of the Christian life deserve the careful study and consistent practice of every sincere Christian. *Separated unto God* is a heart-warming, thoroughly Scriptural, and balanced attempt to help the searching reader do just that.

In the January, 1951, MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN, Chester K. Lehman said of Prof. Wenger's *The Doctrines of the Mennonites*: "The author seeks to make the impact that fundamental to Anabaptist and Mennonite thought are its unique emphases on the Bible, the church, and the Christian life." One of the first and deepest impressions which *Separated unto God* will make upon any reader is its thoroughly Biblical content. It has no cleverly interwoven Scriptural and philosophical theory to advance concerning the Christian's life in a non-Christian world—it simply, and often extensively, quotes the Scripture and then clearly and calmly interprets the relevance of this Word of God to our lives and the witness of the church. It is assumed by the author that if the Scripture can be shown to clearly teach a certain thing it need not be shown that the Christian should therefore believe and practice it. Consequently whatever the reader may think as to the importance of

what *Separated unto God* teaches for him, it can not be disputed that it is the teaching of Scripture.

Dr. Wenger is not radical in his applications. After laying the groundwork of principles and suggesting a few of the most apparent applications, the reader is stimulated but not forced to make other and more personal applications. In fact, it can be predicted with reasonable certainty that many readers will think Dr. Wenger was not as radical as he should have been in his section on the New Testament and Wine. But what Dr. Wenger does say is simply what the Scripture says and neither more nor less.

There are approximately 50 pages of Bibliography in the book altogether with the materials relevant to each chapter listed at the close of the chapter. There are eight appendixes. The book is well indexed including the appendixes. There is an author's preface and an introduction by Paul Erb, Editor of the *Gospel Herald* weekly magazine. The thirteen chapters of the book proper cover separation in each Testament, in history, and then in the areas of speech, recreation and culture, personal and social aspects, courtship and marriage, organizations, worship, stewardship and mutual aid, Christian and the state, life of love in the industrial world, and the God-centered life.

The book is helpfully outlined and can be used for midweek discussion classes. Primarily it is a reference work and source book for general study in the areas of nonconformity. A condensed and popularized version could well be published with discussion questions for general church-wide use in Sunday-school classes, Mennonite Youth Fellowship meetings, prayer-meeting study groups, etc.

It is hoped that this book will receive wide distribution. Whatever disagreement it will arouse, whatever discussion it will stimulate, whatever heart-searching it will make possible, it is the author's purpose to stem the tide of worldliness by calling every Christian to a walk that is consistent with his creed.

Smithville, O. Gerald C. Studer,

## Corrections

Two of the names below the photograph in the April 1952 *Bulletin* were reversed. The names reading from left to right should have been: Mrs. J. S. Lehman, Mrs. J. S. Coffman, and Mrs. Samuel Yoder.

In the same issue the name of Lois Pearl (Hartzler) Cosby, Goshen, Indiana, was omitted as the author of the article entitled "History of the Bethel Church, Cass County, Missouri."



# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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*From an Old Photograph at Elkhart, Indiana.*

The picture above is reproduced from an old photograph in the Phoebe M. Kolb collection in the Archives of the Mennonite Church. It was taken for the *Chicago Chronicle* to illustrate Mennonite garb and appeared Jan. 3, 1904. Standing, left to right: George L. Bender, A. L. Buzzard, Aaron C. Kolb. Seated, left to right: Abram B. Kolb, Titus L. Kolb.

## "Elkhart, Indiana, Center of Mennonite Colony"

The above headline appeared in the Sunday *Chicago Chronicle*, January 3, 1904. Two pictures illustrated the article. One was of a group of Mennonite women, showing the plain costume worn by the members of the denomination. The other reproduced above, was designed to show men's costume being worn by brethren in the Elkhart Mennonite congregation. Below are paragraphs from the newspaper clipping, which was donated to the Archives of the Mennonite Church by Phoebe M. Kolb.

"The congregation in the city proper numbers but 125, but there are five others in this vicinity, and they are all joined

in a bond of unity under Bishop John F. Funk, who resides in this town. . . .

"The Mennonite are not fond of show or ostentation. They eschew bright colors and gorgeous apparel but do not disdain costly and substantial things. Expensive but plain clothing, substantial homes, good books and bank accounts are characteristics of the people of this belief the world over and the Elkhart colony is no exception to the rule.

"The Mennonites are a peaceful people and do not engage in war and strife. They practice the doctrine of nonresistance and do not hold office under any government. They are not mixed in politics and the

greater portion of the colony here and in adjacent districts is employed in farming. There are many carpenters among the men, and the women devote themselves to housework, with the result that the Mennonite women are accounted among the best housekeepers in the world.

"The women do not wear jewelry and dress in severely plain costumes. The men are also known by the peculiar cut of their wearing apparel. In the meeting-house, and these people do not attach any particular sacredness to their place of meeting, the women wear white prayer caps. . . ."

M. G.



## The Merger of the Mennonite and the Amish Mennonite Conference from 1911 to 1928

RAY BAIR

The material for the following study was obtained from the brethren S. C. Yoder and O. N. Jones, the conference reports of the *Gospel Herald*, and the *Mennonite Yearbook* and Directories. It is given in chronological order as much as possible and is largely a statement of what took place in the conferences and committee meetings as these conferences planned for, and accomplished their mergers.

In the three mergers discussed below there had been good cooperation between the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite (A.M.) conferences previous to the mergers, but it was a matter of getting together formally and agreeing on constitutions and Rules and Discipline.

### *The Merger in the Indiana-Michigan District*

Thus it was that in the Ind.-Mich. District the two conferences had been working together very well previously, which fact aided, no doubt, in their union. The first step taken in this movement was the following resolution passed at the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite conference held at the Shore Church near Shipshewana, Indiana, Oct. 12 and 13, 1911: "Since the Mennonite and A.M. Churches are in such close proximity in the two Ind.-Mich. conferences, and since the present conditions are not conducive to the most effective church government, and since in faith and practice they are very much the same, be it

*"Resolved, That we favor the appointment of a joint committee of both conferences to carefully investigate conditions and to work out plans to be submitted to both conferences looking to the unity of the two conferences."*<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that in the same conference records we find the following:

"Our attitude toward the proposed union of all Mennonite bodies was opened by Bro. John Garber. Several others spoke on the same subject. The following was passed by a strong vote:

"Since Christ prayed for the unity of all believers so that the world may believe in Him (Jno. 17: 19, 20), and taught that in union there is strength (Matt. 12:25), and since there is an effort to unify all the bodies, therefore be it

*"Resolved, That we, as a conference, favor a union of Mennonite bodies, provided such union can be brought about strictly on Gospel principles, Rom. 12:5, Jno. 10:16."*<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not this influenced the proposed union with the A.M.'s one can only guess, but very likely it did.

The A.M. Conference responded the next year, 1912, during their conference held with the congregation at Fairview, Michigan, by the following taken from their conference report:

*Response to resolution on union passed by Ind., Mich. Mennonite conference."*

"This conference endorses the resolution passed by the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference and favors the appointing of a committee in accordance with said resolution. Since the sister conference has taken action so far;

"Be it resolved, that a committee of five be appointed to work with a same number appointed by said conference, the first brother named in their committee shall be considered temporary chairman to call a meeting of the two committees.

"The following committee was named: Jonathan Kurtz, D. J. Johns, D. D. Miller, A. J. Hostetler and I. R. Detweiler."<sup>3</sup>

The following year this committee on conference union reported at both conferences, and similar reports can be found in the report of the A.M. Conference of Ind. and Mich., held with the Forks congregation, near Middlebury, Indiana, June 5 and 6, 1913, and the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite conference held at the Bowne Church, near Elmdale, Michigan, Oct. 9 and 10, 1913. The notes on the report given at the latter conference are the following:

"The joint committee appointed by the two Ind.-Mich. conferences met at the home of Bro. J. S. Hartzler on Feb. 13, 1913. After a short session of the separate committees, the two groups met in joint session and the following organization was effected:

"Bro. J. K. Bixler, Chairman; I. R. Detweiler, Secretary. The meeting was then formally opened with a season of prayer. After a friendly discussion of several hours, the following resolutions were unanimously passed.

*"Resolved, That we recommend a mutual co-operation of the two conferences in the mission work of the Conference Districts.*

*"Resolved, That we as a Committee express our appreciation of the mutual fellowship that has existed between the two conference bodies, and urge that our members refrain from doing anything that would in any way hinder the progress of this union and that every member conform to such conditions as will encourage this desirable fellowship.*

*"Resolved, That until further steps are deemed advisable, we recommend that the two Conferences be held as heretofore and that all members of both Conferences be encouraged to attend and take part in the discussions and decisions of each Conference. The report of the Committee was approved."*

In the spring of the next year, 1914 the A.M. Conference met at the Clinton Frame Church near Goshen, Indiana, and the following is from its report:

The committee presented the follow-

ing resolution and on motion Conference adopted it.

Whereas, each Conference has passed resolutions and adopted answers to a number of questions which would be of mutual benefit if placed into the rules and disciplines of the two conferences, and

Whereas, we believe that it would be of mutual benefit to both conferences to have the regulations the same, therefore, be it

Resolved, that we the committees appointed by the two Conferences to get out plans looking to the uniting of the two Conferences advise that each Conference appoint a committee of at least three brethren to work conjointly in getting out Rules and Disciplines to be used by both Conferences,

Resolved, that in case either Conference does not appoint such committee that the other Conference committee may revise its Rules and Discipline for adoption at the next regular meeting of said Conference.

Under the suspension of the Rules the former committee on union was appointed to revise the Rules and Disciplines. D. J. Johns, D. D. Miller, A. J. Hostetler, I. R. Detweiler.

In the fall of the same year the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference met at the Yellow Creek Church near Goshen, Indiana, and the following is found in their report:

"The resolutions passed by the Conference Union Committee and the spring conference regarding the revising of the Rules and Discipline were read and adopted. The Conference Union Committee were asked to work with the brethren appointed by the spring conference and revise the Rules and Regulations and present the same at the next Conference."<sup>6</sup>

The Ind. and Mich. Spring Conference (A.M.) met at the Nappanee (West) Church on June 2 and 3, 1915, and the following paragraphs are found in their report:

"... The Committee appointed to draft a constitution, Rules and Discipline reported.

"The whole Constitution, Rules and Discipline were read, and then reread and adopted section by section.

"It was decided that this Constitution, Rules, and Discipline shall become the rules of Government when adopted by three-fourths of all the votes cast at the Spring and Fall Conferences and ratified by a majority of all the votes cast in the various congregations."<sup>7</sup>

In the fall of 1915 the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference met at the Salem Church near New Paris, Indiana, on Oct. 7 and 8 and the following is found in their report:

"... The proposed Constitution and Discipline of Conference was read. It was decided for adoption it must have at least three-fourths of the votes of Conference and a majority of the votes cast



by the brother-hood in the various congregations. It received more than the required number of votes of Conference."<sup>8</sup>

For the next year, 1916, these notes are found in the report of the Conference Union Committee at the A.M. (Spring) Conference held at the Howard-Miami congregation, June 7 and 8:

"A meeting of the Conference Union Committee was called by the chairman, Bro. J. K. Bixler, and the following recommendations were passed:

1. That the (Union) Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference be declared the successor of the Spring and Fall Mennonite Conferences of Indiana and Michigan.

2. That for the present the time of holding the united conference shall be the first Wednesday and Thursday in June; and that for the present, the bishop and congregational districts remain as heretofore.

3. That the Executive Committee of said Conference shall be as follows: D. D. Miller, Mod.; J. K. Bixler, Ass't. Mod.; J. S. Hartzler, Sec'y.; D. J. Johns and D. A. Yoder.

" . . . The report was accepted and the committee retained."<sup>9</sup>

That fall a similar action took place when the Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference met at the Clinton Brick Church, Oct. 12 and 13. The secretary, J. S. Hartzler records these paragraphs:

"On motion it was decided that the Constitution, Rules and Discipline as passed at the last conference and ratified by the congregations be declared in effect from this date (Oct. 12, 1916). (The votes in the congregations stood 1319 in favor and 155 opposed.)

"The report of the Conference Union Committee was read and adopted with all its recommendations and the committee retained.

" . . . There was a general rejoicing at the thought that hereafter we would not be known as Spring and Fall conferences, but that after centuries of separation, we are again made one in Christ Jesus. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

Thus the merger of these two conferences was effected and on June 5-7, 1917, the first meeting of the united conferences (Ind.-Mich. Mennonite Conference) was held at the Clinton Frame Church near Goshen, Indiana. This merger brought together about 1800 members of the Mennonite Conference and about 1600 members of the A.M. Conference to bring the total membership of the new conference to over 3400.

#### *The Western Merger*

The first actual steps toward uniting the conferences of the West came in 1919. Previous to this, and up until 1922 when the union was completed, the territory had been divided into four Mennonite conferences (Ill., Mo.-Iowa, Kans.-Nebr., and Pacific Coast), and one A.M. (Western A.M.).

In the reports of the conferences the first mention found of anything relative to this is in the secretary's report of the

Kans.-Nebr. Conference held at the Roseland Church, Roseland, Nebraska, Sept. 5 and 6, 1919:

"Question. Does this conference favor the appointing of a committee of three to hold themselves in readiness to meet a similar committee, should any be appointed by the Western A.M. Conference, looking toward the merging of the two Conferences?

"Moved that we favor the plan suggested in the question. Following is the committee: D. G. Lapp, J. A. Heatwole, C. D. Yoder."<sup>11</sup>

The second move in this direction is found in the report for the same year of the Mo.-Iowa Conference at the Mt. Zion Church near Versailles, Missouri, Oct. 9, 1919:

"WHEREAS there has been a pronounced sentiment in favor of the merging of conferences and the reorganization of conference lines in the Middle West, therefore, be it *Resolved*, that we favor such merging and appoint a Committee of three to co-operate with similar committee appointed by other conferences to consider this matter. Committee appointed as follows: Daniel Kauffman, J. M. Kreider, Joe C. Driver."<sup>12</sup>

The third conference to mention this was the Western A.M., which was by far the largest conference both in territory (for it extended from Illinois to the West coast) and in membership (it had more members than the four Mennonite conferences put together). In the report of the conference held near Garden City, Missouri, Oct. 15 and 16, 1919, we find:

"Question. Does this conference favor the merging and re-districting four of our western conferences? *Resolved*, that we look with favor upon such action, provided it can be done satisfactory to our membership. To this end we favor the appointment of twelve brethren who are to confer with similar committees appointed by the other conferences that they investigate the questions and the issues involved and bring their report to the next meeting of the conference for further consideration and action."<sup>13</sup>

No record of any move in this direction was found for the other two conferences but since these three given are the largest they are the most important.

These committees appointed by the various conferences had a meeting at the East Fairview Church near Milford, Nebraska, May 26 and 27, 1920, and prepared a report for consideration by the congregations. This report proposed a plan for both merging and redistricting our western conferences which was submitted to the congregations in the districts affected in the merger. The results from the congregations are given in the report of the Conference Merger Committee thus:

" . . . Of the sixty-four congregations reporting, thirty-nine are recorded as unanimously in favor of the merging. In two congregations there were three votes recorded against, the rest in favor. The vote of the remaining twenty-three

congregations was as follows: in favor 1526; not in favor, 108; undecided, 13. This does not include members giving no expression. We are grateful to God that thus far His Spirit has led and that there has been a marked support of the movement by all the conferences and a large majority of the membership throughout the districts. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Thus, with more than nine tenths of the entire vote cast being in favor of the conferences merging, the committee went on with sixteen recommendations which, if passed, would complete the merger and the redistricting. In the tenth recommendation executive committees were appointed for the five different districts: Ill., Iowa-Nebr., Mo.-Kans., Pacific Coast, and North Dakota. The names of the five conferences, according to the twelfth recommendation, were to be determined by the conferences themselves. All of these five kept the name mentioned in recommendation ten except the North Dakota district which became the Dakota-Montana Conference.

Evidently all the necessary obstacles were overcome, for the following year the five new groups all had their first conferences: the Illinois Conference had its meeting June 7 and 8 at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling; the Iowa-Nebr. Conference met Sept. 14 and 15 at the Lower Deer Creek Church near Kalona; the Mo.-Kans. on Aug. 30 and 31 at the West Liberty Church in McPherson Co., Kansas; the Pacific Coast came together at the Fairview Church near Albany, Oregon, on June 9 and 10; and the Dakota-Montana Conference held its meeting at the Lakeview Meetinghouse near Wolford, North Dakota, on June 23 and 24.

This merger brought together about 7,500 members with nearly 4,500 of them being from the Western A.M. Conference.

#### *The Ohio Mennonite and Eastern A.M. Merger*

The last of the three large mergers to take place was the union of the Ohio Mennonite Conference and the Eastern A.M. Conference.

The earliest material found in relation to this merger is in the report of the Ohio Mennonite Conference for their meeting at the Pike Church near Elida, Ohio, on May 23 and 24, 1923, which reads as follows:

"Question: Does this conference favor merging the Ohio Mennonite Conference and the Eastern A.M. Conference into one body?—E. M. Detweiler.

"Motion to appoint a committee of five to include the Executive Committee to co-operate with a similar committee appointed by the Eastern A.M. Conference."<sup>15</sup>

The Eastern A.M. Conference was held only a week later at the Plainview Church in Portage Co., Ohio, and in its report is found:

"Resolution: Resolved that a committee of five be appointed to work conjointly



with a committee appointed by the Ohio Mennonite Conference to consider the matter of merging the said conferences and report at our next conference."<sup>16</sup>

The progress of this merger, however, did not proceed too rapidly, for in the report of the Eastern A.M. Conference held at the Belleville, Pennsylvania, Church, June 4 and 5, 1924, the next paragraph is recorded:

"The Committee appointed to consider the advisability of merging the two conferences of Ohio; not advisable at present. Report accepted and committee retained."<sup>17</sup>

No mention at all could be found in the Ohio Mennonite Conference report for the years 1924 and 1925, and the Eastern A.M. report for the latter year was just that the merger committee reported and was retained.

The following account given in a letter written by Bro. O. N. Johns states very clearly what happened from this point on until the merger was completed:

"No more can be found on the records until the Spring of 1926 when the two conferences met in joint session to consider the question. Here they appointed a Committee of twenty-two brethren (eight from the Ohio Mennonite Conference and fourteen from the Eastern A.M. Conference) to further study the matter and draw up policies and plans for a merger and present them to the conferences at a later date.

"This committee of twenty-two immediately appointed the following brethren from their number—E. L. Frey, A. J. Steiner, J. B. Smith, O. N. Johns, and A. I. Yoder—to draw up the policies and plans to present to the larger committee.

"This special committee met at Lima, Ohio, July 22-24, 1926, and drew up a Doctrinal Statement, Constitution, Rules and Discipline. Later the secretaries, Smith and Johns, worked out a plan of procedure.

"This was presented to the larger committee at the Leetonia Church, Leetonia, Ohio, March 1, 2, 1927. A few changes were made and it was adopted for presentation to the said conferences.

"The conferences met in joint session at the Beech Church, Louisville, Ohio, May 26, 1927. The Doctrinal Statement, Constitution, Rules and Discipline were presented and adopted with a few changes. At this time the conferences effected a provisionary organization for the Merged Conference provided the congregations approved the plan and document.

"The Doctrinal Statement, Constitution, Rules and Discipline was then presented to all the congregations, excepting three where the bishop in charge thought it best not to. Thirty voted in favor and two unfavorable. The plan required three-fourths majority of the congregations favorable to merge.

"This was reported to the Executive Committees of the two conferences and they declared the Conferences merged and the new provisional organization took charge. This was in 1927."

The following year, 1928, from May 29 to 31, the merged conferences met at the Oak Grove Church near Smithville, Ohio, for the first Ohio Mennonite and Eastern A.M. Joint Conference.

This merger affected around 7,000 members, about 5,000 of them being from the A.M. Conference.

#### Conclusion

In all three of these mergers there had been close co-operation and harmony among nearly all of the churches previous to the union, so it came rather as a natural consequence. Both the Mennonite and A.M. conferences had similar problems before the mergers and these continued afterwards. One avenue of work in which these mergers did aid much was in the operation of mission churches. Oftentimes the two conferences would be operating a mission together and after the union the operation was simplified.

The three mergers affected a total of nearly 18,000 members, over 11,000 of these being from the A.M. conferences and the remaining 7,000 coming from the Mennonite conferences.

- 1 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 26, 1911, p. 477.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, June 27, 1912, p. 206.
- 4 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 30, 1913, p. 491.
- 5 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, June 18, 1914, p. 189.
- 6 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 22, 1914, p. 484.
- 7 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, June 17, 1915, p. 206.
- 8 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 21, 1915, p. 492.
- 9 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, June 29, 1916, p. 236.
- 10 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 26, 1916, pp. 558-559.
- 11 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 25, 1919, p. 487.
- 12 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 23, 1919, p. 557.
- 13 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Dec. 18, 1919, p. 717.
- 14 Conference Merger Committee Report, *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 28, 1920, p. 607.
- 15 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, Aug. 16, 1923, p. 414.
- 16 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, June 21, 1923, p. 253.
- 17 Conference Report, *Gospel Herald*, July 10, 1924, p. 318.

## Book Review

*A Ministry of Goodwill*, by Irvin B. Horst. Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa., 1950. Paper-bound, 119 pp. 30 cents.

This book tells "the story of Mennonite war sufferers' relief as it was ministered during the years 1939 to 1949." Naturally such a slender volume reviewing a ten-year work which spans oceans and continents must needs be little more than an epitome—which is exactly what

it professes to be. It is a summary report back to the constituency which supported the work of the things accomplished.

The first two chapters ("Beginning the Work" and "The Developing Program") are an account of the preliminary organizational work on the home front and of the scouting abroad in relief areas and channels. As the work in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, came to an end early in this period, chapter II also contains the completed report on that phase of the work. The next three chapters ("Relief to Europe," "Relief to the Far East," and "Assistance in Latin America") are an account of the work in its heyday. And chapter VI ("The Continuing Program") is a fitting climax, uniting the whole, and pointing up the significance and necessity of carrying on such efforts "In the Name of Christ."

Within these chapters the narrative proceeds country by country in the approximate order with which the MCC got into them: Poland, France, England, Egypt, Ethiopia, France (re-entered after the Nazi occupation), Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Poland (re-entered after the end of the war), India, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Japan. In addition there are sections on the work of resettlement in Paraguay and Brazil, and on what was accomplished largely by CPS men in Puerto Rico. One is impressed with the necessary resourcefulness of a relief worker as he studies the turns which the relief endeavors took in the various countries. Among these are the organization of clothing distribution, the setting up of child feeding programs, or the actual administration of soup kitchens, the establishment of children's homes, the distribution of food packages, the resettlement of displaced persons, building and building repair, the managing and organizing of transport, the rehabilitation of people mentally and spiritually destitute.

Merits of the book are its very readable style, its careful documentation (mostly from letters and reports by workers on the field), its carefully annotated bibliography, and its excellent appendices. There is a directory of workers (596 of them!) and a record of expenditures, both of money and goods, from the year 1944 to 1949. Money expenditures for the period are a bit less than four million dollars; while goods in kind were supplied to the extent of a bit over seven and one-half million. The book is what it purports to be, a brief, authoritative record of work done, written by one who having been a relief worker himself knew what was significant. Here is an account for anyone who wants to know what the Mennonite Church did about the Second World War. It is written from the point of view that such work is both Scriptural and Mennonite, and that it must be continued. It is an encouraging record of achievement, as well as a great challenge to carry on.

Goshen, Indiana

S. A. Yoder